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Reinterpreting 1968: Mythology on the Make
Paul Piccone

Paradoxes of Jewish Assimilation
Zygmunt Bauman

The Aging of the New Music (1954)
Theodor W. Adorno

The Young Heidegger and the Post-Modern Debate
Russell Berman & Paul Piccone

Heidegger's Letter to the Boss' Daughter
Martin Heidegger

New York Intellectuals
Russell Jacoby

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Telos

A Quarterly Journal of Critical Thought

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Introduction

Idealistic accounts see idealism as an irreducible expression of freedom inextricably rooted in the human predicament: an essential moment in the logic of self-determination, mediating between what *is* here and now and what *should be* tomorrow and everywhere. More realistic accounts ground the phenomenon in objective socio-economic conditions and translate its inflated universalistic pretenses into concrete particularistic interests. This cynical demystification need not entail a quietistic nihilism which, by routinely exposing self-serving interests concealed behind every idealistic mask, ends up legitimating them by unwittingly ontologizing the ultimately particularistic grounding of all universality. It can also be an antidote to ideological manipulation which invariably results in equally debilitating and conformist forms of cynicism when the fraudulently promised results fail to materialize. Thus a *pragmatic* vindication of idealism entails a constant awareness of the inevitable one-sidedness of every project of social reconstruction, but only as a means to prevent the occlusion of the originally motivating universality. The indictment of a particularity, which in the process of concretizing universality also necessarily distorts it, unfolds in the interest of the same betrayed universality. As Hegel knew all too well, the truth of being is not in the annihilation that follows the eventual realization of its inescapable inadequacy, but in the *process* itself: in that *becoming* which, in presupposing the engagement of subjectivity, also ends up constituting it.

In this vein, "Reinterpreting 1968" examines the recent academic fanfare about 1968 in terms of the corporatist compromise, which has turned the ideals of the New Left and the counterculture into so many props for the New Class ideology of 1988. Far from qualitatively altering the system they challenged, most 1968ers have only succeeded in modifying it sufficiently to allow it to stumble along a while longer, notwithstanding the intensification of the contradictions that initially seemed to prefigure its demise. Worse yet, the original emancipatory intentions

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have now frozen into a self-righteous moralism which, dogmatically identified with their self-serving translations, today perpetuate the same structural dysfunctions they were meant to eliminate. By means of affirmative action legislation and similar administrative measures, the spirit of 1968 has been dissipated into the new dialectic of yuppies and underclass. This, in turn, has rendered obsolete traditional bipolar political categories in a new social context characterized by the emerging confrontation between confused populist aspirations and an internally divided New Class.

The tribulations of modern Jewish history are also related to this logic of universality and particularity. Zygmunt Bauman's "Paradoxes of Jewish Assimilation" retraces Jewish history to show how both assimilatory strategies and radicalism are opposite sides of the same coin. Contrary to conventional interpretations of Jewish radicalism as the unavoidable outcome of the failures of assimilation strategies (mostly because of deep anti-Semitic roots), Bauman focuses instead on internal class divisions in the Jewish community itself. Consequently, the recent drastic decline of Jewish radicalism is not seen as a function of an assimilation which, notwithstanding the profound re-particularizing impact of the Holocaust and the subsequent formation of the Israeli state, has finally taken place. Rather, it is related to the disintegration of Jewish community ties and the dissolution of Jews into the increasingly homogenizing middle classes. Although Baumann's reconstruction stops far short of the Holocaust and its aftermath, the dialectic of universality and particularity he articulates and the conclusions he draws have important implications not only for Jews, but for all other minorities or subordinate groups struggling for recognition and full social integration. The universalist outlook he identifies as the ideology of disenfranchised minorities seeking entry into a society controlled by established majorities was also the ideology of the original civil rights and women movements in the 1960s. Their subsequent radicalization in the 1970s into feminism and black nationalism, however, cannot be seen as a function of the disintegration of their respective communities. Here sociological categories prove inadequate and must be complemented by political and historical ones. Furthermore, the outcome is not the transcendence of earlier particularity, but its reaffirmation with a vengeance and even more debilitating consequences. Thus what may have become a mute issue for Jews remains ever more urgent for other minorities in the US today.

Recent scholastic spats between modernists and postmodernists involve

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similar issues. This is what lurks behind the recent Heidegger and De Man debates, which are obliquely addressed by the *explication de texte* of a recently surfaced Heidegger letter to Husserl's daughter. A surprisingly revealing document, this letter exhibits all the limitations of Heidegger's mature thought as well as the conformist nihilism of his postmodern followers. Begun as a modernist counteroffensive to outflank curiously effective postmodernist attacks against the dogmatism and imperialism of "Western metaphysics," the "shocking revelation" of Heidegger's well-known Nazi past (and, in the US, of De Man's previously unknown Nazi proclivities in the same direction), what is at issue is another version of the squabble between modernist pseudo-universality and postmodernist self-serving particularity now slandered as inherently irrational, anti-Semitic and crypto-Nazi. Both positions turn out to be opposite sides of the same New Class ideological coin. As Jacoby indicates in his review of two books on New York intellectuals, efforts to remain radical today result in efforts to dig up and re-evaluate all sorts of previously discredited intellectual carcasses. The Heidegger and De Man debates deploy the same strategy; only this time they function as negative examples.

Modernist elitism and postmodern nihilism confront each other again in aesthetics. In their respective defenses of Adorno, both John Bokina's review and Robert Hullot-Kentor's introduction to Adorno's "The Aging of the New Music" reject postmodern and popular music as genuine artistic innovations. Hullot-Kentor forcefully restates Adorno's objections to popular music (because of its regressive appeal to instincts and for discouraging the development of adequate listening abilities conducive to the constitution of subjectivity), while Bokina attacks "the relativizing tendencies" of postmodernism. Hullot-Kentor's brilliant but unreconstructed recycling of Adorno's defense of high culture is, however, problematic. Although the new music — or even its "newer" edition, meant to replace the already aging but formerly "new" version — may be conducive to the constitution of a viable subjectivity, the fact that it is accessible only to a few *aficionados* raises questions as to its possible cultural relevance. After all, Adorno's notion of subjectivity and of the totally administered society were undeveloped limiting concepts not meant to be confused with objective descriptions of anything given once and for all. A totally administered society, which would do away with all subjectivity, is in principle impossible, while living subjectivity cannot be understood as a form of Zen. Rather, it is a *process* constantly constituted and reconstituted in everyday activities. Thus it may be possible to access it without *necessarily*

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having to pass through the purgatory of Schoenberg's music.

Nevertheless, this depriving art of its privileged status does not entirely rule out its possibility. It does, however, throw into question its long overrated autonomy. With the breakdown of formal rules as a result of the modernist revolt against traditional aesthetic forms and of industrialization of aesthetic production, the boundaries between what is art and what is not have become even more muddled, prompting critics like Arthur Danto to declare the "end of art." Tim Luke's analysis of the film industry exemplifies precisely this process of progressive dissolution. He describes how an aesthetic genre such as film, an *industry* from its very beginning, ends up entirely instrumentalized to conform to social and economic imperatives. In pronouncing art dead because of its subjugation to corporate interests, Luke rejects any notion of aesthetic autonomy in discussions of film, thus collapsing his argument into the bad flip side of Hullot-Kentor's and Bokina's. Luke's undifferentiated dismissal of autonomy in discussions of film forces him to abandon the hope for an art with both a content (beyond its instrumentalized social function) and a tie to subjective experience. The task for art remains to carve out a space between the Scylla of an elitist autonomy and the Charybdis of an all-encompassing commodification.

All of this points to the aging of Adorno's version of Critical Theory. Although he defended the emancipation of art from old formal constraints and criticized the deterioration of an autonomous high art into the reproduction of a purely technical rationality, he failed to provide either new criteria of demarcation between art and non-art beyond the already obsolete category of the "new," or to suggest how to defend even the most remote enclaves of high art from commercial instrumentalization other than by cloathing it in linguistic and conceptual impenetrability. Instead, he retreated to his old solutions of the "production of new types, or rather new characters" and the heroization of the artist's "hopeless isolation." Notwithstanding all this, "The Aging of the New Music" is still a paradigmatic essay, useful for understanding not only Adorno's own critical stance towards some of his earlier evaluations, but many otherwise obscure passages in *Aesthetic Theory*.

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Reinterpreting 1968: Mythology on the Make

Paul Piccone

The past is always a construct meant to mediate between the present and the future. It is not only inherently unstable and subject to constant reconstitutions but also embodies, in its various permutations, a living teleology and concealed objective contradictions. As such, these "pasts" are invaluable documents not solely or even primarily about what *was*, but about what *is* and what *should be*. Thus the flood of memoirs, monographs and conferences being produced on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of 1968 — a veriatable culture industry in itself — tend to reveal more about the late 1980s than to clarify what "really" happened two decades earlier. This predicament is further complicated by the fact that, for most of the authors of this exercise in collective nostalgia, 1968 also corresponds with their coming of age. From the perspective of maturity, it is all too natural to glorify youth and bemoan its passing away.[1] Inextricably entangled with personal biographies,

1. Thus the 1960s are increasingly being reconstructed by radicals-become-academics as split between a "good early period and the supposed insanity of the late sixties." Gone biologically, this youth is now reenacted in theory by returning to the liberalism and social-democratic politics of "the good old days." Cf. Winifred Breines, "Whose New Left?" in *The Journal of American History* (September 1988), Vol. 75, p. 529. Ironically, Breines' otherwise welcome *explicit* vindication of the emancipatory features of the 1960s is unintendedly balanced by an *implicit* instantiation of some of the 1960's unfortunate consequences. In at least four places (pp. 528, 530, 531 and 545) she insinuates, without providing any supporting arguments other than, at best, casuistic biographical inferences, that, since most authors writing on the 1960s are white males, this has unspecified egomaniacal implications. That such an unwarranted ideological generalization is allowed to pass unchallenged in the official publication of the "Organization of American Historians" is a measure of the intellectual intimidation resulting from the disciplines caving in to affirmative action ideology even at the theoretical level.

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these public reconstructions emphasize a libidinal exuberance and generational euphoria that may or may not have been there. The unintended result, however, is that they invariably mythologize what they seek to explain. It is no accident, therefore, that the overwhelming majority of these Leftist celebrations tend to present 1968 as the functional equivalent of the Second Coming, almost immediately followed, however, by yet another crucifixion.[2] Unclear about precisely *how* it came about, these reconstructions cannot provide satisfactory accounts of *why* it failed. Therefore they end up misinterpreting not just its meaning, but also its legacy.

Too much has already been written about the 1968 events to warrant further reexaminations of their trajectory. Although there is still considerable disagreement about their social and political implications, it is fair to claim that, beyond flirtation with drugs, sexual experimentation and other new forms of instant gratification, the general political concern was with an idealism that readily translated into participatory democracy, equality, personal commitment and a never-too-precisely spelled out "qualitatively new life." In this sense, it was the rejection of an increasingly corrupt society, which seemed to be moving closer and closer to total administration and whose smooth functioning, recognized and theorized both by mainstream sociologists (such as Bell, Lipset and Aron), as well as by critics (such as Marcuse, Adorno and C. W. Mills), unexpectedly ran into a rationality crisis. Within the rapidly expanding and increasingly affluent middle classes, the consumerism meant to generate a new social consensus had succeeded beyond even the most optimistic expectations in sealing a class compromise, which guaranteed the stability and profitability of corporate capital, while at the same time providing organized labor with legal recognition, high wages and considerable social benefits. In order to do so, however, it had been necessary not only to regulate capital by means of government intervention, but also to homogenize labor into

2. Since most conservatives and traditional liberals see 1968 primarily as mass pathology, when they reluctantly deal with it their objective is usually to exorcise rather than celebrate it. In interpreting 1968 either as an expression of run-of-the-mill decadence, or as an accidental aberration, they miss its epoch-making social significance. From a shared dogmatic perspective, which never quite came to terms with the profound pervasive implications of the rupture institutionalised by the New Deal as a qualitative new model of social organization, both sides uncritically postulate an unbroken continuity between pre-1968 and post-1968 realities. Thus they find it unnecessary to reexamine their linear analytical categories and end up systematically misreading the events of the last half century even more than the Left.

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a mass of disciplined, interchangeable producers and abstract manipulable consumers primarily by means of the culture industry. But in this process of social homogenization necessary to create the preconditions for consumerism — a process already begun in the 1920s — residual traditional mediating institutions were bureaucratically displaced, thus removing essential internal control mechanisms and leaving exposed previously submerged power relations, social injustices, and a growing sense of normlessness.

Assumed as "normal" by the predominant affirmative administrative ideology, the gradual erosion of this usually unacknowledged yet essential social dimension went practically unnoticed until the early 1960s, when rapid economic growth accelerated the process and precipitated an unprecedented social crisis. Merely as another "Great Refusal" of traditional bourgeois values resulting from periodic generational realizations of their incompatibility with the institutional realities which allegedly embodied them, the 1960s were not exceptionally original. What distinguished the 1960s counterculture from the 1950s beats and other earlier routine generational disruptions was its subsequent political metamorphosis. This nth cultural outburst was politicized by the fact that, unlike in earlier versions of the same phenomenon, this time the process of generalized corruption was not interpreted, as in the famous Pogo cartoon, as caused by an intractable collective "us." It was seen as mediated, orchestrated and intensified by a state commited to defend corporate capitalist interests against all and at whatever costs. What, more than anything else, helped drive this point home was the perception of the Vietnam War as an unpopular, meaningless administrative folly. This explains why the crisis was rightly interpreted as not resolvable merely by means of more and better state intervention.

Unlike most crises, which are susceptible to bureaucratic management, this one could not be tackled in the usual administrative way. This particular crisis differed from normal, run-of-the-mill crises affecting only part of society in that it was *systemic* in character and had been brought about precisely by the government's growing practice of dealing with all problems administratively. Such an approach inevitably establishes a relation of dependance between the bureaucracy and those it serves, whom it gradually turns into clients. As clients, however, they lose that autonomy which invariably generates a tension between them and the bureaucracy and which, in the long run, guarantees the system's smooth functioning. Without this tension the bureaucracy

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loses external controls and, slowly but surely, runs into a rationality crisis. Any further *administrative* measures only complicate rather than remedy the problem. In this context, any meaningful solution has to reactivate, through non-administrative means, the equivalent of those control mechanisms previously rooted in the increasingly eroded civil society.

The unanticipated consequences of bureaucratic misadministration in foreign and domestic policy did generate a countercultural reaction which threatened to do precisely this. It sought to develop an alternative grassroots infrastructure within or next to the ruins of traditional civil society to oppose a state deemed terminally decadent and corrupt. Before it had an opportunity to mature, however, this process was shortcircuited not only by unresolved internal contradictions and repressive measures but, even more importantly, by a shrewd new bureaucratic compromise to absorb those sectors of the new countercultural movements most receptive to administrative integration. So internalized, the countercultural opposition not only lost its *explicit* original emancipatory teleology, but also ceased to function *implicitly* as a potential internal regulatory mechanism, thereby contributing to the long-term solution of the system's broader rationality crisis.

As a result, this rationality crisis was only mitigated by means of merely temporary measures rather than institutionally eliminated. Administratively integrated by means of affirmative action legislation and other extraordinary measures, from being part of the solution, the opposition itself became part of the problem. To the extent that these dynamics are still largely misunderstood both by the managerial elites administering government bureaucracies and by the veterans of the countercultural movements, the original problems not only remain but, unthematized, they continue to elude critical scrutiny. This explains, to a great extent, why even the attempts to introduce a new model of post-New Deal social organization in the 1980s by a resurgent conservative coalition have generally failed. The corporatist compromise that successfully reestablished social peace in the 1970s also absorbed and thereby eliminated those potential new internal control mechanisms, without which no post-New Deal model can decisively resolve the system's rationality crisis.

Since, by the 1960s, the dominant economic system had effectively penetrated the whole non-communist world and new means of communication had created the illusion that this still fundamentally heterogeneous world had really become McLuhan's mythological "global

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village" — at least at the level of collective representations — what previously may have been seen as localized events with limited sectoral consequences suddenly took on an international character. While inextricably rooted in national histories and particular development patterns, local disruptions were televisually synchronized and semiotically unified. With the Vietnam War as its main totalizing focus, the various *national* crises, which were significantly different in terms of origins and dynamics, were catalyzed into *one* major event that the media, because of its very nature, unwittingly depicted as a worldwide explosion. But media imagery can only distort or, at best, help constitute, *perception* of the real which, idealism and hermeneutics to the contrary notwithstanding, retains an irreducible preconceptual autonomy. Eventually, these homogenizing representations of the 1960s were frustrated by the heterogeneous international realities they fraudulently depicted. Those for whom these homogenizing representations had *real* consequences, were eventually doomed to political defeat.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the televisually mediated domestic disruptions of the 1960s resulted in widespread misinterpretations of these events, not only by a frightened population which responded by rapidly shifting to the Right of the political spectrum, but even by many of those who participated in them. Lacking readily identifiable and logically coherent antecedents, these disruptions were experienced as the secular equivalent of miraculous occurrences and contributed to further confuse already well-mystified historical interpretations.[3] After

3. Thus these events tend to be interpreted as expressions of what Paul Potter, one of the founders of SDS, described as "breakaway experiences" — sudden feelings of power and freedom typical of every generation, but invariably perceived as unique and apocalyptic. Cf. James Miller, *"Democracy is in the Streets." From Port Huron to the Seige of Chicago* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987), p. 317f. In extreme cases, they are portayed as mysterious cataclysmic forces such as what George Katsiaficas, in *The Imagination of the New Left: A Global Analysis* (Boston: South End Press, 1987), calls "the *eros* effect." Dedicated to Marcuse, who is probably to be blamed for this misleading Freudianization of politics, this disorganized collection of notes ends with a lame critique of Althusser after having uncritically deployed whatever recyclable notions it could salvage from the Marxist conceptual junkyard. Thus discredited Old Left political categories such as "class," "party," "proletariat," etc. are metaphysically transubstantiated by a titillating "*eros* effect" to explain the tribulations of the spirit of 1968. What Katsiaficas misreads in his efforts to establish an unbroken emancipatory continuity between 1968 and the present (by, among other things, implicitly apologizing for the terrorism of the 1970s) is how that "*eros* effect" was largely mediagenic and eventually resulted in various movements "getting screwed" in the demagoguery of Jackson's Rainbow Coalition, the new nationalism of the German Green Party, the displacement of the barbarities of the Shah of Iran by those of Khomeini, the repressive "administrative" policies of the Sandinistas, etc. — phenomena that generally duplicated and intensified, rather than eliminated, existing irrationalities.

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they had been defeated and eliminated politically with Nixon's landslide victory over McGovern in 1972, however, most remnants of the New Left began to question their often facile assumptions about the fragility of the system. As such, they gradually or not-so-gradually began to reexamine older, previously discredited but still more credible Old Left theories about social and political change. According to traditional Left ideology, the 1968 events were seen as a crucial turning-point, but one that had to be understood in terms of its still uncritically-accepted secularized Christian theory of history pointing unavoidably toward a truly communist *novum*. By forcing particular and diversified histories into a global ideological straitjacket, these interpretations distorted whatever original emancipatory longings had managed to surface in 1968. They dissipated its specificity in favor of a mythology instrumentalized, two decades later, to interpret as successes its actual failures, and dismissed as failures its real accomplishments, thus legitimating the New Class ideology of uneasy but established aging 68ers trying to live up to a lingering revolutionary identity.[4]

Sons and Daughters of 1968

Who exactly are these mythologizers? Of those 68ers who successfully traded their unrealized radical ideals for relatively confortable careers, most of them bit the political bullet and, reluctantly or not so reluctantly, rejoined the previously despised liberal establishment by grudgingly acknowledging the folly of their youth. Originally lived as the beginning of the solution, for them the 1968 events came to be remembered increasingly as part of the problem: an acceleration of the very process of moral disintegration they initially opposed. These are the neoconservatives, whose most lasting contribution has been their terminal corruption of the traditional American Right into an exhausted Cold War liberalism obsessed with safegarding, downscaling and fine-tuning the rapidly eroding achievements of the welfare state.[5] Having peaked in

4. As Breines points out, these interpretations focus on "the absence of effective organization, the growth of militancy and violence, a lack of discipline, and a purportedly foolish utopianism irrelevant to the task of effecting serious political change in America" as the causes of the New Left's eventual demise. This retroactive emphasis on organization and structure which, Breines to the contrary notwithstanding, cannot be related to either race or gender in any immediately obvious way, is not just an index of most 68ers' reintegration into conventional political widom. It also sets the stage for the next step: the downplaying of the grassroots nature of the counterculture and the importance of the alternatives it briefly, but largely unsuccessfully, prefigured. Cf. Breines, *op.cit.*, p. 530ff.

5. For the new internal constitution of conservatism, see Paul Gottfried and Thomas Fleming, *The Conservative Movement* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1988); and Paul

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the late 1970s, when they broke away from the McGovern brand of post-68 ultraliberalism, they soon discovered that even a charismatic figure like Reagan, with a substantial popular mandate to reverse the deadening bureaucratic thrust of the central government, could do little in the way of containing what was perceived as general decline and decadence. So they reconciled their unhappy consciousness with the imperfection of a system seemingly susceptible only to minor quantitative modifications. Stultified by the contradiction between their unshaken traditional American values (autonomy, individuality and justice) and their apparently incorrigible counterfactual realities (dependence, conformism, and structural injustice), after the early failures of the Reagan Administration to tackle these problems these neoconservatives eventually slid back into confortably moderate liberal positions. For them, 1968 became an unmitigated political catastrophe to be filed, along with forbidden sexual fantasies and the like, in the darkest recesses of the collective unconscious. Their demonized vision of 1968, as a Dionysian orgy resulting in the sobering morning-after of the 1970s and 1980s, is neither historically accurate nor politically useful other than in providing dubious justifications for their capitulation to the logic of the given.

The second largest group of 68ers consists of born-again liberals, who managed to work their way out of the eschatological lure of the Marxist theory of history, but not sufficiently to the point of also questioning their roles and privileges as an intellectual elite entrusted with overseeing the incubation of the equivalent of the otherwise discredited "classless society" (now opportunistically rebaptized and mystified under dubious euphemisms such as "radical democracy").[6] Repulsed

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Piccone, "The Crisis of American Conservatism," in *Telos* 74 (Winter 1987-88), pp. 3-29.

6. This explains, to a some extent, the current broader academic obsession with theories of democracy. The problem here is that democracy —partecipatory, representative, or otherwise — presupposes a kind of active citizenry which is not only largely lacking, but is presently being diminished by the impact of the culture industry, current socialization practices, institutional disintegration, etc. Therefore, the most urgent *radical* political task today involves the constitution of that individuality without which all democratic rhetoric degenerates into the New Class ideology of those who can and do participate, to defend, represent, coerce and eventually dominate those who cannot and do not. Projected backward, this academic obsession contaminates even brilliant reconstructions such as Miller's collective biography of the founders of SDS (*op. cit.*). The lame conclusion that trickles out of his fascinating narrative is that what the New Left really lacked, and which accounts for its eventual failure, was . . . an adequate theory of democracy (p. 320). As a result, Miller also misreads the subsequent conservative resurgence and the extent to which it has been both permeated by the legacy of 1968 as well as sabotaged by the failure of the counterculture. This is why, although he derisively quotes Nixon's 1971 State of the Union Speech promising broader democratization (p. 413), and endorses

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by the reductive economic determinism of the Old Left, this group sought to vindicate the primacy of "the political." Postulated in theory, however, this emphasis on politics ended up depoliticizing social theory by reformulating it as a communicative action miraculously entrusted with providing the means to empower all citizens within a broadened public sphere characterized by "undistorted" communication.[7] Since usually only intellectuals have the skills, the interest and the time to publically debate their views, the manifest democratic character of this project became subverted by its unintended but unavoidably exclusionary (and therefore potentially authoritarian and manipulative) implications. Communication theory thus unwittingly deteriorated into the ideology of ex-radical intellectuals seeking entry into the managerial elite.[8] By monopolizing expertise in articulating the logic of a

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Tom Hayden's acknowledgment of the extent to which Reagan had internalized the democratic lessons of the 1960s (p. 321), he cannot see how in the 1980s the Republicans' attempts to decentralize and deinstitutionalize national life (to be sure, primarily in the interests of corporate capital) failed because the social preconditions for it were lacking. As such, he uncritically dismisses the 1980s simply as a "counterrevolution."

7. Originating as an elaboration of the predominant ideology of rapidly declining passive aristocrats who, at the twilight of the British Empire, gave up trying to change the world in favor of merely bickering about it (analytic philosophy), communication theory was eclectically deployed in the early 1960s to explain class differences within a post-Marxist sociology moving away from the earlier fashionable economism. Various versions of it were articulated by Pierre Bourdieu in France, Basil Bernstein in Great Britain, and eventually even by some of the remnants of the Frankfurt School in Germany. Marginally useful in Europe, this approach tends to generate methodogenic problems when applied elsewhere. Uncritically imported in a US, which has never had to extricate itself from native aristocratic or overly authoritarian traditions, it has generated scores of pseudo-problems. Thus mythical legitimation crises end up overshadowing real ones, while concern with an allegedly declining public sphere systematically occludes the reality of a cretinized population unable and unwilling to participate in it. Far from injecting a breath of intellectual fresh air, the recycling of an eclectic *teutonic* version of analytic philosophy under the trusted label of the old Critical Theory has only tended to stiffen a previously relatively fluid pragmatic tradition and, in Rorty's words, to precipitate a scratching of places which have never really itched. Worse yet, as John Rajchman points out, the formalism of this dubious import not only provides, at best, a jargon-ridden duplication of already discredited approaches, but ends up dogmatically getting in the way of a potentially fruitful reception of other perspectives. See John Rajchman, "Habermas' Complaint," in *New German Critique* 45 (Fall 1988).

8. One of Alvin W. Gouldner's most penetrating insights was to have foreseen this development in *The Future of Intellectuals and the Rise of the New Class* (New York, The Seabury Press, 1979). His premature death, however, prevented him from developing a broader theory of the New Class, with the result that today there is still no clear theoretical elaboration of this phenomenon. The posthumous publication of some of his unfinished manuscripts, such as *Against Fragmentation: The Origins of Marxism and the Sociology of Intellectuals* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), has only generated more confusion. Thus, on the basis of this material, which must have been drafted as early

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"democratic" discourse necessary to legitimate an advanced industrial society allegedly beset by a generally non-existent "legitimation crisis," born-again liberal 68ers successfully stake their claims as card-carrying members of that same technostructure they otherwise indict as the undemocratic opposition. Unlike commited neoconservatives, whose unqualified admission of guilt presumably absolves them of what they now see as the foolishness of their youth (at least, enough to establish a break with the past sufficiently sharp to permit self-rightous indictments) born-again liberals have remained too closely identified with the substance of their earlier positions. Thus they either vindicate unrealized emancipatory possibilities or, unlike their neoconservative colleagues, instead of contempt, generally feel an embarassment and shame about their past that relegates them to silence and evasiveness.

It is a third group of 68ers, largely unrecostructed remnants of the New Left, who most eloquently mythologize the meaning of the 1960s, while claiming an uninterrupted commitment both to the ideals of 1968 as well as its politics. However, this seemingly admirable consistency, lasting over two decades, is suspect. The necessarily contingent bonds established between the motivating impulses rooted in the lifeworld and the ethical ideals they generate are inherently unstable. Unless constantly reconstituted in terms of changing conditions, these bonds age rapidly. When they eventually break, the objective political projects that seek to realize ethical ideals end up subverting the subjective motivating intent. This is roughly what has happened to traditional 68ers who, in steadfastly holding on to the by now instrumentalized ideals of 68, have managed to subvert the original motivating impulses. The latter constitute the real spirit of 1968. They remain its most important legacy as the latest attempt to revitalize the broader Western ethical tradition of which they were an integral part.

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as the middle 1960s, when Gouldner was lecturing on these subjects in his graduate seminars, Martin Jay misleadingly hints that, towards the end of his life, Gouldner's theory of the New Class may have taken a Habermasian turn. See Martin Jay, "*Against Fragmentation* Against Itself: Contradictions and Anomalies in the Development of Gouldner's Theory," In *Theory and Society*, vol. 15, n. 4. As such, it would have contradicted one of his closest students and an editor of the posthumously published volume, Cornelius Disco, who put forth exactly Gouldner's position on the subject in his "Critical Theory as Ideology of the New Class: Reading Jürgen Habermas," in *Theory and Society* vol. 8, n. 2 (September 1979). At any rate, according to Gouldner, the only intellectuals who end up as truly radical are those whose careers are blocked. All others are likely to eventually develop theoretical outlooks commensuate with their structural location within the New Class.

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The Spirit of 68 vs. its Political Ideals

What has happened to the ideals of the 1960s in the hands of traditional 68ers is not unusual. They went the way of all ideologies, only faster. Expressing living aspirations embedded in a lifeworld which can be apprehended conceptually only at the cost of privileging some of its most prominent moments, these often conflicting ideals strive to reconcile, by social and political action, two radically different dimensions of being: the infinite with the finite, the whole with the parts, the *is* with the *ought*, the subjective with the objective. Because both ideals and the normative projects they generate are themselves *categorical* and thereby tainted by the inevitable onesidedness of intellection, they can retain their validity only as long as they are not permanently saddled with any given historically-specific interpretation of their meaning. In order to remain true to the original precategorical aspirations, they must not only be subjected to periodic reconceptualizations, but constantly modified to recapture what the necessarily partial constituted ideal unavoidably excluded and which, otherwise, reappears periodically in the forms of unintended counterfinalities.

Ethical ideals and political ideologies seeking to realize them are always transmitted in an already fully constituted form, which may or may not capture the complex nexus between subjective needs, objective possibilities and institutional obstacles. Through what Husserl called the first reduction — something experienced concretely by anyone who eventually achieves maturity — these ideals are systematically deconstructed and confronted with subjective aspirations which usually embody traditions at the most fundamental level of immediately lived experience. The extent to which the inherited ideals are deemed adequate to these precategorical subjective aspirations determines whether they are consciously accepted as meaningful or rejected as obsolete and irrelevant. When social conditions change as readily as they have in the 20th century, it is not surprising that almost every generation finds it necessary to break with the *constituted* tradition and its reified ideals, which almost invariably appear as corrupt, hypocritical and, in that sense, false. They are rejected, however, precisely in order to uphold that same tradition at a deeper level, where these ideals lose their onesided ideological character and are also felt, rather than simply thought, as part of the lifeworld and consequently constitutive of our very being as concrete social subjects.[9]

9. In this sense, Miller is correct in framing the successful rise and SDS in terms of

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The new ideals that replace the old ones, however, confront a similar fate. Here form eventually contradicts content. It is all too well known how uncritical adherence to once revolutionary ideals of communism has, for more than half a century, meant a conservative apology for New Class privileges, unprecedented corruption and systemic injustice in the land of "really existing socialism." The same logic applies to the ideals of 1968. They have also become, in the hands of traditional 68ers, political figleaves for conservative strategies perpetuating, rather than alleviating, systemic dysfunctions which continue to generate suffering, waste and cynicism. The uncritical collapse of 1968 ideals into a static and unimaginative Left *Realpolitik*, has destroyed them more effectively than any outright rejection by occluding and subverting the concern with substantive justice, equality and freedom of those who originally formulated them. Reified into a particular political project, the axiological dimension has forfeited its rootedness in the lifeworld in exchange for a contingent mundanity whose normative validity is no longer automatically guaranteed by the conditions of its genesis. Trapped in the facticity of their political translations, reified ideals lose sight of their original teleology, without which the subsequent *Realpolitik* deteriorates into accounting, opportunism and corruption.

The honesty of born-again liberals with Habermanian predilections fares no better than the hypocrisy of traditional 68ers. Framed within a communication theory still basking in the warm radical glow of traditional Critical Theory, this dialectic of ideals and aspirations is recycled by born-again liberals in terms of a linear logic of system and lifeworld which, however, has equally conformist consequences. Unable to deal with the lifeworld in the original Husserlian *lebensphilosophische* meaning, as a dimension of being immediately lived in the first person and as the repository of an ontic horizon never fully accessible to intellection, they Kantianize it away as the world of unacknowledged "culturally transmitted and linguistically organized stock of interpretive patterns" to be progressively rationalized but never colonized. Uncritically commited to a Panglossian notion of modernity as the best of all possible worlds (thus in need of completion rather than criticism), born-again liberals see the current systemic crisis in terms of distorted

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a revitalization of traditional American values such as democracy which, in the early 1960s, seemed hopelessly compromised (*op. cit.*, p. 337f.). Usually, successful social movements are precisely those which are radical in the original etymological meaning of going back to the roots in order to criticize the branches. It may be an exageration, however, to reduce the polyphony of ideas and visions of the1960s solely to democracy, as Miller and other 68ers seem inclined to do.

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communication between an otherwise sound and increasingly more complex system and a lifeworld which ends up thereby colonized, rather than rationalized. The solution to the problem is in restoring undistorted communications between the system and the lifeworld by democratically steering the system's increasing complexity, thus replacing destructive colonization with constructive rationalization. A generalized version of what Carl Schmitt derisively called *una clasa discutidora* here becomes the snake-oil to cure all social deseases.

While critical of the undemocratic character of the ever-growing bureaucratic apparatus, born-again-liberals nevertheless respect its formal rationality and bank on a revitalized public sphere unencumbered by distorted communications to guarantee its *substantive* rationality. The emphasis is entirely on a democratization which would thereby fine-tune an otherwise fundamentally sound system commited to completing the project of modernity. The system's numerous structurally ineliminable flaws, such as the capitalist presupposition of an infinite growth precipitating ecological crises, widespread marginalization of most of the world's population, social disintegration as a result of precisely the much-heralded Kantian bureaucratization of reason into so many hyper-rational sub-spheres adding up to an irrational totality, etc., are automatically occluded by an approach predicated on the assumption that all problems can be talked away in a civilized matter.

Opposition movements are accordingly classified in terms of their relation to the one and only archimedean point determining what is progressive and what is not: the completion of the project of modernity. Thus the only progressive opposition movements are those which seek to prevent colonization of the lifeworld from the viewpoint of modernity. Pre-modern or post-modern movements are dismissed as conservative since the first oppose *all* progressive rationalizations of the lifeworld in the name of tradition, while the second reject rationalizations as such as the imperialist imposition of an otherwise arbitrary Western metaphysics.[10] Here the position of born-again Habermasian liberals is indistinguishable from that of traditional liberals. With a little undistorted communication, from being the problem the system becomes the solution. Those doing all the talking within a public sphere which usually turns out to be the university, will be the intellectuals who thereby enter the managerial elite in an informal advisory capacity.

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10 See Jürgen Habermas, "New Social Movements," in *Telos* 49 (Fall 1981), p. 37. Now also available in Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. 2, trans. by Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1987), p. 396.

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Theorizing 1968

Although recent celebrations of 1968 by traditional 68ers seem at first sight fragmentary and heterogeneous,[11] most of them share a hidden ideological agenda. The few rare efforts at explanation, which occasionally surface through the wide cracks of the glorified reconstructions of events, readily betray a series of common, often unstated, assumptions concerning the origins, character and disintegration of the spirit of 68. Since, like the Old Left, the New Left has also long since ceased to be a thriving movement to become embalmed as a closed historical event, the perspectives of both traditions now converge by blending their respective histories into one uninterrupted narrative. Although the New Left differed substantially from the Old Left — at least to the extent that it began by re-examining the meaning of emancipation in terms of the living experiences of 1968 independently of how the Old Left defined it within its sclerotic doctrines — the role of intellectuals in both has hardly changed. It remains representative in character, and this helps explain the increasing convergence, with the passage of time, of Old and New Left perspectives. This is not because the Old Left is being rejuvanated but, rather, because the New Left is growing old.

Traditionally commited to statist solutions predicated on the constitution of a social reality homogenized in the imagery of abstract Enlightenment utopias, Old Left intellectuals found their derivative catalytic role in the party as the mediation between the proletariat idealized into the role of a *universalizing* revolutionary class and the *universalized* classless society of the future. With the definitive fading of the industrial proletariat as a result of the shift from labor-intensive to capital-intensive modes of production in the early 1960s, traditional 68ers had to locate a new agency of social change. They actually did better than that: they found *many*. But this fragmentation had a price. It shattered that universality behind which intellectuals historically concealed their inescapable particularity. No longer based on the *universalistic* call for the abolition of exploitation, but on a mechanical aggregation of *particularistic* corporatist demands predicated on race, gender or recently legitimated sexual proclivities, traditional 68ers replaced the

11. For a collection of narcissistic accounts which uncritically seeks to vindicate the politics of the 1960s *sic et nunc*, see Stanley Aronowitz *et. al.* ed., *The 60s Without Apology* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984). Here the 1960s are presented not only without apology, but also without explanation or understanding. In this fashion the volume unwittingly succeeds in capturing precisely the irresponsible scatterbrained aspect of the 1960s that contributed to its rapid downfall and explains the ease with which its emancipatory aspiration were readily instrumentalized by New Class interests.

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party with opportunistic alliances like the Rainbow Coalition, comprising also intellectuals (but only as another specific social formation with its own particularistic interests). Consequently, today it has become much more difficult to mystify and dissolve their identity of modern versions of what Hegel called "external mediators" in search of potentially victimized social groups to represent against an allegedly hostile and repressive social system. What they failed to change in the 1960s or to understand in the 1970s, they mythologize in the 1980s to legitimate their otherwise tenuous contradictory identities as the radical wing of the managerial elite. It is the ideological assumptions of this group of ex-New Left intellectuals that have generated most of the myths of 1968 and simultaneously obliterated its motivating spirit.

According to the conventional wisdom of traditional 68ers, 1968 is explained in roughly the following five theses: 1) late capitalism in the mid-1960s precipitated an intensification of its internal contradictions, thus creating the objective conditions for a revolutionary upheaval. 2) As a response, the movements of 1968 sought a qualitative alternative. 3) Because the various heterogeneous forces could not coalesce, corrupt Old Left organizations were able to instrumentalize whatever remaining resentment survived drugs, repression and demoralization. Thus the spirit of 1968 did not succeed in qualitatively altering the system and was either integrated or altogether annihilated by the repressive apparatus. But since the objective conditions that gave rise to those events remain, 4) new versions of "1968" are constant possibilities; and 5) the role of traditional 68ers who have not repudiated their youthful past and who have since become teachers and writers (thus officially entrusted with thinking in the present social division of labor), becomes one of upholding the ideals of 1968 and of excogitating viable strategies in view of new historical conditions. Like fresh flowers, however, ideals eventually wither. The evanescent spirit which nurtured them cannot be stored in books or in data-bases, but can only be relived. So it turns into another self-serving ideology. Here history tends to repeat itself. Like those old Bolsheviks who were lucky enough not to be purged and had no trouble confortably turning into the *nomenklatura* to manage new and more sophisticated relations of domination, most ex-New Leftists also joined the New Class in their respective countries to perform functionally equivalent roles. As with Old Left dogma in 1968, the ideology of traditional 68ers, far from being in any way still emancipatory, turned conformist and became a major obstacle in the redeployment of that spirit that remains the real heritage of 1968.

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A careful autopsy of a typical symposium, suggestively titled "1968 — Back to the Future?"[12] and an equally typical conference on "1968 in Global Retrospective"[13] provide excellent examples of this mythological construction of 1968. Both of these efforts at historical explanations of 1968 assume in their very titles the international character of the events as well as their exemplary status as a viable model for the future. Yet packaging a haphazard B-grade symposium with a corny title plagiarized (in an inadvertently indicative manner) from a mediocre Hollywood movie, cannot conceal the organizational confusion implicit in the throwing together of analyses of the US, France, Mexico, Germany and Italy.[14] The emphasis on the international nature of the events is not the result of simply buying into the media hype about 1968. Rather, it turns out to be essential in establishing a political continuity between the pre-1968 Old Left and the post-1968 New Left. It unwittingly creates the myth of a kind of 5th International as an update and continuation of the now defunct previous four. This continuity allows the integration of watered-down versions of Marxist theory into the traditional 68ers' political strategy to legitimate *de facto* corporatism and thus provide a revolutionary aura to what has become a relatively irrelevant but bothersome faction of the American Democratic Party. As a global

12. In *Socialist Review* (formerly *Socialist Revolution*), Vol. 18, no. 4, pp. 93-157.

13. Held at Brooklyn College, October 20-21, 1988. Unintendedly, this conference ended up capturing the contradictory and self-destructive spirit of 1968 more in its organizational form than in its manifest content. Despite the organizers valiant efforts, many of the scheduled speakers failed to show up and had to be replaced because of a wide variety of real or fabricated reasons, ranging all the way from Daniel Cohn-Bendit's certified medical grounds, to Barbara Ehrenreich's sudden, last minute realization that the conference's prestige may not have been commensurate with her new "feminist superstar" stature. Also indicative of the peculiar predicament of traditional 68ers is the poster widely distributed to advertise the conference. In it, the picture of a clenched fist popping out of the smokestack of a factory carrying the slogan "*La Lutte Continue*" is contraposed by the printed acknowledgement of sponsorship by what can only be described as a "who's who" in international capitalist agitprop (or, to use more fashionable terminology, the main agencies of international imperialist hegemony): The German Marshall Fund, Goethe House, The Cultural Services of the French Embassy, The Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and The New York State Council for the Humanities, etc. On what grounds other than marketing 1968 as a cultural tourist attraction can the likes of "The Cultural Services of the French Embassy" or "The Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs" justify for those who oversee their budgets the financing of such an event?

14. While countries such as Czechoslovakia and China, which witnessed major disruptions in 1968, must have been excluded merely on logistical grounds (e.g., lack of qualified authors to discuss the topic) rather than on the basis of conscious choices dictated by carefully worked out theoretical considerations, the intent is clearly to present 1968 as a global event within a onedimensional narrative totalized by the still uncritically accepted traditional Old Left teleology.

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event, 1968 thus becomes a watershed between the Old and the New Left. Far from irrevocably separating the two, however, this account unites them by explaining and thus legitimating the radical change in strategy.

The Myth of the End of US World Hegemony

In the conference, Immanuel Wallerstein analyzed 1968 as "a revolution in and of the world-system."[15] To the extent that his presentation was paradigmatic of traditional 68ers' mythology, it provides an excellent opportunity to examine this process of historical mystification. It sought to present 1968 in terms of a neo-Marxist variant of the traditional Marxist analysis of the crisis of capitalism. Accordingly, these events resulted in changes in "cultural-ideological realities," which in turn necessitated the strategic New Left displacing of the proletariat by a new and improved revolutionary agency such as the Rainbow Coalition. But unless one trivializes the meaning of "revolution" from anything resembling the bloody affairs in America in 1776, France in 1789, and Russia in 1917, to something closer to what Madison Avenue successfully marketed a few years ago as "The Dodge Revolution" and similar advertising gimmicks, the events of 1968 can in no way be characterized as "revolutionary." As several participants to the same conference readily pointed out, there were no shifts in power, and no substantial structural changes to warrant using even the logistic terminology of "uprisings" or "revolts," let alone "revolutions." The few isolated clashes in Chicago, Washington, Paris, etc., not only did not affect the system in any significantly negative way but ultimately indirectly relegitimated it. Having eventually ended the Vietnam War, eliminated residual discriminatory barriers based on race and gender, etc., the system's democratic credentials not only survived the 1960s unscathed but were actually improved.

Wallerstein's "revolutionary 1968" is meant to legitimate a theory of capitalist development tracing a familiar Marxist trajectory. Accordingly, the US, as the bastion of international capital, having passed its golden age in the post-WWII era, entered in the 1960s a phase of gradual but irreversible decline. Allegedly, with Vietnam, American international hegemony began to be challenged, and 1968 represents the culmination of the first major attempt by oppressed masses worldwide to attain liberation. The system in the 1960s *did* enter a crisis, but it was by no means a traditional one rooted in economic cycles and entailing the usual socio-economic disruptions. Rather, it was a different type of

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crisis in the midst of affluence and incomprehensible in terms of traditional Marxist categories postulating increasing emiseration. It was precipitated in the US by the unanticipated consequences of the new social relations created with the introduction of Keynesian planning and federal regulation after the Great Depression. Structurally, it was the same type of crisis that also exploded, more intensely, in "really existing socialism," which was even less prepared to confront it. In highly bureaucratized societies, the meaning of systemic crises had expanded and become new steering mechanisms. Seen in these terms, 1968 takes on a different light.

Thus, far from being the result of autonomously growing internal opposition, as the old Leninist doctrine analyzed the genesis of "genuine" political crises, 1968 was brought about by a rationality crisis precipitated in the beginning of the 1960s by the exhaustion of the New Deal and its welfare successor domestically and by the growing obsolescence of *political* imperialism internationally. The bureaucratization institutionalized to regulate the increasingly wild fluctuations of *laissez faire* capitalism turned out to be inherently unstable in that it gradually eroded the preconditions required for the system's rational functioning. By penetrating almost every previously autonomous social institution through direct legislation and regulation, or indirectly through taxation policies and other newly available steering mechanisms, the New Deal and the heterogeneous welfare state that succeeded it effectively eliminated that internal resistence which had hitherto guaranteed its rationality.

As an aggregation of autonomous (although by no means representative) particular interest-groups not yet penetrated and regulated by the administrative apparatus, the pre-New Deal polity provided both political direction for a still largely *instrumental* bureaucracy as well as the heterogeneous, independently-given social context within which to ground policies. Once these particular interest groups came under the jurisdiction of the bureaucratic apparatus, the mostly informal institutions of civil society became functional extensions of it, thus loosening that tension which feuled earlier social dynamics. The result was tendential stagnation. As sources of resistance and conflictuality, these autonomous social formations (or even traditional bourgeois individuality before it gave way to the present "narcisistic personality") had regulated and thus facilitated the government bureaucracy's initial efforts at social engineering. The gradual erosion and disintegration of these unacknowledged social preconditions left the bureaucratic apparatus a Frankenstein bent on intensifying the very crisis that gave rise to it.

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What was needed from the viewpoint of reestablishing the system's internal rationality were new autonomous institutions to function as the same regulatory mechanisms previously provided by traditional civil society. The counterculture developed spontaneously into a myriad of counterinstitutions potentially able to eventually carry out this needed regulatory role.

Within the American system of checks and balances (but also in every other advanced industrial society with radically different traditions and histories), it is difficult to institute radical policy changes other than under conditions of emergency. As sociologists since Weber have never ceased to emphasize, bureaucratization not only perpetuates itself but tends to expand to a point where it becomes so pervasive that even the executive branch is paralyzed by it. When that happens, crises cease to be simply systemic dysfunctions and become *politically necessary preconditions* to empower the otherwise weak executive with extraordinary decision-making options. Only within such a context of national or international urgency can an Administration summon sufficient popular consensus to checkmate administrative/congressional interference and act decisively.[16] While the 1968 events caught most people by surprise, eventually they were dealt with roughly along these lines. This does not mean that 1968 was diabolically masterminded from above to facilitate

16. The most spectacular example of this is the Bay of Tonkin incident. The analytical tools necessary to deal with this type of predicament were prefigured, surprisingly enough, over half a century ago by Carl Schmitt who, however, only theorized the centrality of exceptions in determining sovereignty and, therefore, the nature of the state in general. Schmitt argued that, in modern times, as a secularized version of the miracle, the exception fulfills roughly the same role in dealing with radical departures from everyday administrative routine. But what Schmitt elaborated as a decisive limiting concept for political theory applicable only in exceptional circumstances, today, at a time when everything exceptional readily deteriorates to the level of the mundane, it has fallen victim to this post-modernist fate and it has become routinized. Thus, it has become part and parcel of the administrative logic of liberal democracies. Given the American government's constitutionally built-in division of power, it is extremely difficult to change direction or implement radical measures in the course of its normal functioning. All such radical policy reorientation practically takes on the character of "miracles" requiring extraordinary conditions to justify their occurrence. These extraordinary conditions nowadays appear as "crises," whose urgency coalesces a popular consensus behind a predictably welcome call for executive action, thus empowering it to successfully break through normal administrative stalemates. As such, crises cease to be *just* systemic disruptions and tend to become also extremely effective administrative mechanisms. No interpretations of recent history can claim to grasp its dynamics without taking this into account. For the classic statement on the role of the exception in political theory, see Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology*, trans. by George Schwab (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1985).

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a shift from a New Deal to a post-New Deal model but, rather, that the disruptions resulting from routine policy shifts and misjudgments could and were instrumentalized as unanticipated steering mechanisms. Domestically, it smoothened the shift from Kennedy's "New Frontier" or its more ambitious successor, Johnson's "Great Society," to what over a decade later was to be marketed unsuccessfully as Reagan's Hollywood vision of America. Internationally, it relegitimated the launching of a new and immensely more sophisticated phase of American imperialism on a financial, informational and cultural basis.

Subsequently, in the 1970s, crisis management became considerably more sophisticated. It is impossible here to discuss in detail the extremely clever instrumentalization of the first oil crisis — an accidental event originally precipitated by the vicissitudes of Middle East politics. It is clear, however, that it helped considerably in internationally redistributing the costs of the Vietnam War (by severely eroding, through the ensuing inflation, the weight of the debts incurred in carrying out the war without instituting any major internal austerity measures) and, subsequently, to reestablish US hegemony in Latin America and the Third World by means of the recycling of the huge amounts of petrodollars accumulated by Arab countries in US banks. This financial strategy was even deployed, before Watergate terminally crippled the Nixon Presidency, to destabilize Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe as the Trojan horse of a Western-financed technological modernization. Mediated by institutions such as the International Monetary Fund, today it is much easier for the US to internationally integrate and subordinate otherwise economically and politically autonomous countries within a new international division of labor.

If one compares the international situation today with what it was in the early 1960s, the most interesting differences are not, as Wallerstein and traditional 68ers would have it, the drastic decline in US world hegemony as a result of the 1968 events. Rather, major changes in the geopolitical configuration of forces have resulted from the collapse of the so-called "Second World" as either a challenge or an alternative to the capitalist system, and from the disintegration of the "Third World" — especially Africa and Latin America — in the wake of the two oil crises and the successful imposition of a new international division of labor detrimental to the economic interests of underdeveloped countries. If the US looks internationally weaker today than it did then, it is because of the rise of Japan and Western Europe as major competitors — a process initiated and supported unqualifiedly by the US. Consequently,

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even if, following Wallerstein, one deduces out of Marxist metaphysics that 1968 was a "revolution," it must also be deemed a failure in that it not only did not significantly diminish US world hegemony, but has tended to rationalize what it presumably sought to demolish. Yet this rationalization generated a new set of conflicts among different capitalist interests and ran into considerable internal opposition, to the point of stalling for almost a decade. This stall had nothing to do with what Wallerstein calls "the legacies of 1968" which, from the viewpoint of the logic of the system, not only did not threaten the system, but actually revitalized it.

The Myth of the One and Only World System

While the 1968 events had undeniable international repercussions, to overemphasize this aspect results in an unwarranted totalization of political realities which, rather than helping to develop a fresh perspective, tends instead to feed into the otherwise discredited old logic of the Cold War. By implicitly relegitimating the potentially emancipatory virtues of a "socialist other" contraposed to the predominant system of capitalist domination, the geopolitical analysis of the world as *one* system ends up mystifying the nature of international dynamics as still, in the ultimate analysis, determined by a decisive confrontation betweeen capitalism and its communist or socialist other. The more fundamental conflict between confused populist aspirations and the domination of a diversified managerial elite are thus systematically occluded.

Wallerstein has devoted considerable effort to developing a peculiar Marxist interpretation of the logic of the world-system.[17] However, as has been repeatedly pointed out (both in print[18] and at the conference), if it is at all appropriate to speak of "world systems" in a postmodern world of increasing fragmentation and heteronomy, it is imperative that the Soviet world system be analytically distinguished from the capitalist one, since internally the two are independent of each other. While post-*perestroika* developments may allow, at least in principle, for the remote possibility of the eventual merging of the two systems as a result of Western investments flowing into the USSR, the highly unlikely future convertability of the ruble, etc. it only precipitates confusion to analyze the 1960s in terms of *one* all-encompassing logic

17. Practically all of Wallerstein's works deal with this subject. See *The Modern World System*, *The Politics of the World Economy*, *The Capitalist World Economy*.

18. Cf. Victor Zaslavsky, "The Soviet World System: Origins, Evolution, Prospects for Reform," in *Telos* 65 (Fall 1985), pp. 3-22.

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although, as centrally regulated advanced industrial societies, they both confront isomorphic organizational predicaments).

The most significant event of the pre-1968 period which, notwithstanding his obsession with *the* world-system, Wallerstein misses (and consequently ends up misinterpreting most of what has happened since), is the parallel erosion of the model of bureaucratic centralism in the USSR and of the New Deal in the US. By 1956 it was clear that Stalinism was no longer either viable or justifiable in the USSR. Similarly, by the late 1960s a phase of social engineering and bureaucratic optimism had ended in the US with the double failure of the welfare/warfare state in normalizing Vietnam and in instituting the "Great Society." While the Brezhnev restoration reflected the Soviet bureaucracy's adamant refusal to confront the socio-economic and political disruptions that Krushchev's reforms threatened to bring about, its US counterpart was Watergate, which effectively derailed the Nixon-Kissinger efforts to develop a new post-New Deal model.[19] Within this framework, 1968 cannot be seen as a "pre-revolutionary tinderbox" ready to explode but, rather, as one of the political expressions of the social friction invariably generated, at least in relatively open and affluent societies, by significant shifts in models of social organization.

Geopolitically, both systems attempted to depoliticize everyday life

19. Wallerstein's one-dimensional logic traps him into seeing as *internally* related merely synchronic events in the US and USSR which, in terms of the separate dynamics of the two systems, represent entirely different phases and have the exact opposite meaning. He sees the pair Kennedy-Krushchev as representing a renewal subsequently frustrated by their failure to bring about "any fundamental reforms." As such, they were allegedly replaced by the forces of restoration — the pair Johnson-Brezhnev — which precipitated 1968 as a popular reaction. This is a sloppy analogy, which does not bear close scrutiny. Neither Kennedy and Krushchev nor Johnson and Brezhnev relate to their respective systems in the same way. Kennedy's "New Frontier" and Johnson's "Great Society" were both conscious efforts to *extend* and revitalize a New Deal model which had not been significantly altered by the two previous Eisenhower administrations. Thus they are the last exponents of that phase which started with Roosevelt and was not really seen as hopelessly obsolete until Nixon came to power. Even then, efforts to develop a qualitatively new model were temporarily stalled by Watergate. The ensuing Carter Presidency is probably the closest American equivalent to the Brezhnev regime. Like Brezhnev, Carter, notwithstanding all his anti-Washington rhetoric, also failed to even prefigure a new model of social organization by merely patching up yet another version of the New Deal. Unlike Kennedy, the proud heir of Roosevelt, Krushchev sought decisively to break with Stalin. Only the bureaucratic counteroffensive which brought Brezhnev to power prevented him from instituting socio-economic measures that only recently have been placed once again on the Soviet agenda. If political leaders are to be paired in terms of their structural relation to their respective systems, they should be paired as follows: Krushchev-Nixon, Brezhnev-Carter, and Gorbachev-Reagan.

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as a precondition for the unhindered expansion of bureaucratic and technocratic rationality. In the USSR, anything threatening the party's hegemony in social, economic and political matters was brutally liquidated in the late 1920s-early 1930s to pave the way for the consolidation of the Stalinist regime, leaving the system with no autonomous internal control mechanisms. In the US in the 1950s there were also attempts, with little popular support and dubious ideological justification, to eliminate all remaining internal opposition. Because of qualitatively different political cultures, however, the results were different in the two cases. Given the central role of the Bill of Rights in the US Constitution and deeply-rooted US traditions of respect for civil liberties, the McCarthy era, unlike Stalinism in the USSR whose legacy continues to hound the Gorbachev regime, ended up only as a brief aberration in recent American history. The repressive strategy turned out to be both structurally unwarranted and ideologically unnecessary — especially since the culture industry and other sophisticated mechanisms of social integration had already brought about the functional equivalent of the homogenization and depoliticization Stalin institutionalized by means of the Gulag and the secret police in order to implement a policy of rapid industrialization. Hence, when bureaucratic and technocratric involution precipitated fiscal, motivational and rationality crises in both systems, the US found the means for internal reform in a badly eroded residual civil society functioning at least sufficiently to generate new social movements. In the USSR, on the other hand, reform could only be dictated from within the all-encompassing governmental apparatus. Tainted by the bureaucratic context of its birth, this reform was pre-subverted in the process of its very formulation.[20]

Social rationality as an attribute of society as a whole is not immediately accessible to any of its unavoidably one-sided parts, nor given once and for all (both Hegel and Marx turned out to be wrong in locating this rationality respectively in the bureacracy and in the proletariat). Thus it cannot be entrusted to a team of technocrats and functionaries

20. One need only look at the massive amount of fine print accompanying any of the particular measures associated with *perestroika* to realize the extent to which they are bureaucratically subverted in their very formulation. Reforms in agriculture, private enterprises, etc. carry so much bureaucratic regulatory baggage as to be doomed to fail before they are even implemented. Thus *glasnost*, by promising to generate a minimal public sphere to counteract bureaucratic authoritarianism, is a *necessary* precondition for *perestroika*. That even Gorbachev is rapidly coming to the conclusion that in order to implement *perestroika* it is necessary to curb *glasnost* indicates the bureaucratic nature of the entire undertaking and, consequently, also prefigures its failure.

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to codify and institutionalize it in a bureaucratic apparatus. Rather, it obtains as the resolution through conflict and negotiation among all partial visions, projects, interpretations, and self-understandings constituting society. When *one* group (such as the party) not only usurps sole access to it under the pretense of embodying universality, but proceeds to systematically exclude all other social parts in running society, the counterproductive result is the *irrationality* of the whole. Worse yet, this irrationality is not self-correcting, even when it is explicitly attacked from within the existing power structure (as in the case of *perestroika*).

Since, as Lukács put it,[21] totalities can only be grasped by other totalities, systemic *irrationality* cannot be overcome by mere administrative means deployed by the very bureaucracy responsible for the system's original rationality crisis. The system's rationality can be restored only by opening up the political process, granting access to the governing apparatus to previously excluded elements, and by empowering and reempowering large social sectors that have been systematically cretinized by the culture industry, the paternalistic bureaucratic apparatus, and consumerism. Furthermore, this process cannot be simply mandated from above, but must itself be already an expression of that very power that is to be formally recognized and codified. In this sense, countercultural developments are essential. By mobilizing that which the bureaucratic apparatus necessarily excludes (since access to it is in principle ruled out by the codified *modus operandi* of formal organizations) — that lived dimension beyond the grasp of all already-constituted structurations — an autonomous counterculture may succeed, among other things, also in reintegrating within the totality previously excluded sectors whose marginalization had originally contributed to precipitating the crisis.

Given the different internal logics of the two so-called world-systems, the liberal US was much better prepared to deal with the systemic crisis of the 1960s than the bureacratic-centralist USSR. Marxism and economic determinism to the contrary notwithstanding, it is politics rather than economics that made a crucial difference. The traditional 68ers' Manichean metaphysics of a world-historical struggle between a monolithic capitalist version of Reagan's "evil empire" and diffuse anti-systemic forces of good may help keep the faith in a fading ideology, but does not help very much in understanding recent history and,

21. Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, trans. by Rodney Livingstone (London: Merlin Press, 1971), p. 39.

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consequently, the present. Today, most of what passes for "anti-systemic forces" is already well integrated into the managerial system, while new emancipatory efforts that do not readily fit the codified categories of the traditional 68ers' ideology are automatically focused out of the picture.

The Myth of the International Communist Conspiracy (Left Version)

Since most traditional 68ers are obsessed with providing a one-dimensional global account of 1968, they are forced to interpret the particularities of events in both countries beset by disturbances in terms of a fictitious unitary logic and to exclude whatever does not to fit such a procrustian theoretical bed. Thus Wallerstein's claim that "the primary protest of 1968 was against US hegemony in the world-system (and Soviet acquiescence in that hegemony)," far from being anything close to an empirical generalization or having any relation to concrete historical events, turns out to be a mechanical deduction which confuses more than it clarifies.[22] Although, in his introductory statement, the editor of the symposium in *Socialist Review* (formerly *Socialist Revolution*) seems to share this monolithic assumption, the various sectoral contributions proceed to systematically contradict it.

Clearly, the Vietnam War is essential to understanding 1968, but it was neither the *only* focus nor, in terms of the dynamics of the various countries where serious disruptions occurred, the *most* important. The media's depiction of the Vietnam War as an immoral epochal event did polarize world opinion and did generate considerable opposition to US foreign policy. This, however, does not automatically translate either into a revolutionary upheaval or an unqualified anti-Americanism. As a universal symbolic reference, the Vietnam War and anti-imperialism in general could permanently mobilize particular national movements only to the extent that these phenomena were in fact grounded in the living experiences of the various political actors. They

22. Consider the Czechoslovak events and the subsequent Soviet invasion in August 1968. As the last East European echo of those Krushchevite reforms, which had already been shelved in the Soviet Union by Brezhnev, the Prague Spring had absolutely nothing to do with anti-Americanism and should be understood entirely in terms of the logic of the Soviet system. For Wallerstein, however, it ends up as another expression of opposition to US hegemony. This is by no means merely Wallertein's personal idiosyncracy. It is a position uncritically shared by most other traditional 68ers. See, e.g., Katsiaficas, *op. cit.*, pp. 59ff., according to whom the same New Left, drugged by the mysterious "*eros* effect," practically engulfed the whole world faster than the AIDS virus. Thus the Prague and Chicago events in 1968 end up sharing the same political meaning.

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generally were not. With the possible exception of a marginal third-worldism, which lingered on until the Cambodia holocaust, they rapidly faded as soon as the US announced its gradual pull-out from Indochina. This is why the trajectories of the various 1968 events have to be explained first and foremost in terms of domestic conditions obtaining in the particular countries. What such an analysis shows is that it is not too difficult to locate opposition to US world hegemony. Far from being "anti-systemic," however, this opposition is usually not only firmly commited to the capitalist system the so-called "anti-systemic forces" allegedly oppose, but is also deeply rooted in long-standing conservative nationalist sentiments.

The several accounts of the 1968 events in France, Mexico, Italy, Germany and the US collected in the "1968 — Back to the Future?" symposium all strive in vain to locate global unifying themes, only to end up, because of the very character of the empirical evidence they present, by emphasizing essentially endogenous factors. If *one* unifying feature had to be generalized from all five contributions, it is certainly not anti-Americanism, or opposition to US world hegemony. This became central only later, during the phase of rapid disintegration, after the traditional Left and ultra-Left grudgingly (because of their uneasiness with the suspect class character of the new "revolutionary" agents) joined in. Nor was it the previously outlined rationality crisis which, because of diverse national contexts and histories, exploded along the indicated lines only in the US (as hinted in relation to the USSR, where a parallel crisis did occur even earlier, it did take a radically different form and followed very different dynamics). It was, instead, student demands for a meaningful rationalization of their respective educational systems, which had grown too large too fast.[23] This, in turn, was the result of the capitalist boom during the 1960s, triggered by economic integration in Europe, industrial rationalization away from marginally profitable labor-intensive technologies in favor of capital-intensive ones and, later in the 1960s, by the aggregate demand artificially inflated by the Vietnam war.[24]

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23. Here the emphasis on the student movement rather than the civil rights movement, which also had a major impact, is due to the fact that the latter was a specifically American phenomenon, which did not have international parallels until relatively recently and, at any rate, is far from having run its course in places such as Western Europe.

24. While at first sight the rationality crisis may appear as altogether different from the crisis in education that precipitated the student movement, the two are not only inextricably related but the second is a particular instance of the former. Although in

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As Ross and Frader point out, May 68 in Paris was precipitated by administrative university reforms found unacceptable by a swelling student body.[25] Whatever opposition to US world hegemony transpired, it was nothing either unusual or particularly revolutionary. It had already been articulated much better and more effectively than any student movement by those French capitalists and politicians who had earlier led France out of NATO and were renown worldwide for their aggressive nationalism. The situation did not change significantly in the 1980s. Stalemated between two contradictory traditions — the bureaucratic centralist, on the one hand, and the self-managerial, on the other — when the Left finally came to power with Mitterrand it could do little but administer the state apparatus in a way not substantially different from its conservative predecessors. Considerable opposition to US hegemony lingered, but it can hardly be classified, with Wallerstein, as either anti-systemic or very progressive.

Judith Adler Hellman's account of the Mexican events, which culminated in the massacre in Plaza of the Three Cultures in October 1968, is equally free of any obsession with opposition to US world hegemony: "the Mexican student movement was an expression of resentment to the demagogic rhetoric of 'progress' and 'development' used to camouflage the greed and corruption of the ruling elite. . . The Mexican protesters were concerned with . . . scarcity, inequality, and profound social injustice. . ."[26] The focus was primarily on domestic issues. After

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the US the student movement was mobilized primarily by the Vietnam War (and not, as Miller argues in *"Democracy in the Streets,"* by the initially lame liberal rhetoric of SDS, which only subsequently blossomed as the War expanded), it was the rationality crisis in higher education that practically fused the anti-war and the student movement. The bureaucratic involution in higher education made it impossible for these institutions to adapt quickly to the explosive growth of the early 1960s and the changing character of the student population. The most obvious example of the roots of the student movement in the rationality crisis in higher education is the history of the Berkeley Free Speech Movement which originally exploded and developed entirely as a result of bureaucratic ineptness.

25. George Ross and Laura Frader, "The May Generation: From Mao to Mitterrand" in *Socialist Review* (formerly *Socialist Revolution*), vol. 18, no. 4 (October-December 1988), pp. 105-115. While the title sounds provocative, its relation to the body of the text is unclear. A more appropriate title could have been something like "The French New Class: From Nanterre to the Bureaucratic Apparatus." What the authors convincingly reconstruct is how the rebellious students of Nanterre and other universities in 1968 eventally "came to power . . . wearing the uniforms of the managerial elite," eventually to treat the new French university students no better than they themselves had been treated. Not surprisingly, when these new students protested "new and improved" educational reforms they steered clear of any identification with the Left.

26. Although the account of what happened in Mexico in 1968 is provided by

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a few bullets put an end to whatever illusions the students may have had about the fragility of state power, "the movement disintegrated and activities organized over the next three years focused exclusively on the demand for the release of imprisoned movement activists."[27] In a country where the ruling apparatus is well known for its historical ability to integrate and instrumentalize opposition leaders, the only outcome the author can point to is the reinvigoration of the Communist Party and "the development and elaboration of Marxist discourse."[28] At a time when *perestroika* has practically delegitimated all Communist Parties, and when Marxism has regressed from serious political theory to the archeological ruins of 19th century ideologies, this alleged 1968 legacy in Mexico only seems to follow, on the level of ideas, the standard capitalist practice of dumping in the Third World products no longer marketable at home. At any rate, whatever anti-Americanism lingers in Mexico is not a specific legacy of 1968.

The trajectory of the 1968 events in Italy reconstructed by Stephen Hellman differs only in its more orthodox Marxist character. Although he blames the dissipation of the "potential unleashed by the movements" in 1968 on the Italian Communist Party (PCI), it is not because of the party's Old Left dogmatism regarding things such as the focus on the proletariat or the primacy of the party, but because of the PCI's "strategy and behavior," i.e., it was too timid and not sufficiently revolutionary.[29] The account he provides practically ignores the student

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someone who, in terms of her own description, must have been a revolutionary tourist who did not miss any of the major "happenings" of 1968 (apparently she managed to be in an anti-war demonstration in Central Park in April 1967, in the assault on the American Embassy in London early next Spring, in the Sorbonne in May, to end up in the Plaza of the Three Cultures in Mexico City in October 1968), it is objective enough to dispell any illusions about the Mexican student movement's possible global goals or particularly anti-American sentiments beyond the garden-variety anti-Americanism cultivated in Mexico at least since the days of Pancho Villa. See Judith Adler Hellman, "Mexico: Thawing of the Frozen Revolution" in *Socialist Review* (formerly *Socialist Revolution*), *op. cit.*, p. 122.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 123.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 128.

29. Stephen Hellman, "Italy: *Il Sessantotto* and Beyond" in *Socialist Review* (formerly *Socialist Revolution*), *op. cit.*, p. 150. Somehow, Hellman leaves the impression that, had the PCI behaved in a more respectful "revolutionary" way, it could somehow have saved the day. This is *ouvriériste* moonshine. In the face of the backlash generated by the wave of terrorism in the 1970, had the PCI behaved less uncompromisingly it would have been decimated much more seriously that it was. What Hellman refuses to acknowledge is that the PCI is an organizational dinosaur unable to extricate itself from its Stalinist past and adjust to new political realities. For years the party has tried unsuccessfully to dissociate itself from the Soviet Union and court US support for a

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movement in favor of run-of-the-mill cyclic labor struggles and emphasis on party politics. Besides depriving "much of the discussion on the Left of a clear focus," what the *sessantottini* allegedlly contributed was, at best, a liberalization of that same party once their various movements disintegrated and they flocked back into its folds. All in all, according to this fairly standard ultra-Left Marxist account, the student movement only confused the Italian political panorama. Notwithstanding Hellman's orthodox pro-party Marxist bias, nothing in his reconstruction indicates that opposition to US world hegemony was what totalized the 1968 movements into action. To his credit, he does not buy into Wallerstein's version of an emancipatory "international communist conspiracy" no longer run from Moscow but, in its post-modern phase, decentralized in every post-1968 protest movement.

Unlike other countries, where the 1968 movements' national character is immediately obvious, the West German case is considerably different. Given its Nazi past and the subsequent post-WWII partition, politics outside an international context has been virtually impossible. Yet, in this case too, Eley's account immediately focuses on "the massive expansion of higher education in the 1960s"[30] as the key to understanding the 1968 events. To be sure, from the early 1960s the German student movement exhibited strong opposition to US world hegemony, and to this day the more orthodox Left remains peculiarly pro-Soviet. But, from the mid-1960s, Rudi Dutschke immunized the German SDS against any uncritical apology of "really existing socialism." Thus, as Eley correctly points out, when the 1968 movements disintegrated with the terrorism of the mid-1970s, their legacy, the Greens, eventually opted for a nationalistic neutrality.[31] As in France, in Germany

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coalition with the center. The *compromesso storico*, and Eurocommunism in general, failed not only because the PCI was cleverly outmaneuvered by a hostile Socialist Party that has prevented it from moving too far in a technocratic social-democratic direction, but because the only distinctive identity the party remains rooted in an incresingly embarrassing Third International heritage. Instead of the 1968 movements wreaking ideological confusion within a politically timid party, as Hellman thinks, it was the PCI that always cast a long shadow within the movements, thus subverting from the very beginning their emancipatory thrust.

30. Geoff Eley, "Germany since '68: From the APO to the Greens" in *Socialist Review* (formerly *Socialist Revolution*), *op. cit.*, p. 131.

31. Given Germany's geopolitical position, this neutrality is understandably suspect. Some of the more paranoid East European ex-New Leftists have even seen it as the dawn of a new Rapallo, i.e., the beginning of a gradual West German capitulation to Soviet imperialist designs. See Ferenc Feher and Agnes Heller, "Eastern Europe Under the Shadow of a New Rapallo," in *New German Critique* 37 (Winter 1986), pp. 7-57.

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also it is not difficult to find considerable opposition to US world hegemony. This opposition, however, has more to do with normal competition among conflicting capitalist interests than with any global anti-systemic aspirations. At best, it will only contribute to a post-1992 European economic and political integration— a development that promises to precipitate a rationalization of the international capitalist system more far-reaching than the creation of the Common Market over a generation earlier.

Women, Blacks and the Demise of the Counterculture

In the old Hegelian dialectic, radical thought arose as negation — as the indictment of the necessarily one-sided character of a not-yet-sufficiently-mature objectified being. As such, this negation was also simultaneously an affirmation of that which had been excluded and demanded to be reintegrated, thereby paving the way for a higher form of social life. Radical thought, therefore, was inherently unstable. Either it succeeded in vindicating its claims, subsequently turning conservative in the defense of the new state of affairs it had helped to bring about; or it failed, to ignonimously drop out of the picture as irrelevant. In either case, it could not remain what Hegel derided as an external "beautiful soul," which, by refusing to soil its hands with the dirt of concrete history, managed to stay out of the frey — clean, coherent, and unaffected. It had to objectify itself into that history which thereby became its own.

Given the predominant division of labor, this "beautiful soul" could not do so as *mere* radical thought. It needed to find a concrete embodiment: a social agency to appropriate its vision and translate it into reality. For almost a century the proletariat seemed to fulfill that role. But even before that proletariat became a majority of the population, sufficiently strong to carry out its historical function, it was marginalized and thus disqualified by the capitalist restructuring of the mode of production (the widespread introduction of capital-intensive technologies). Without an agency of social change, radical thought was threatened with unemployment. From the catalyst of universal emancipation, it risked becoming downgraded to the naked expression of

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Clearly, with the recent collapse of the Soviet economy, the Russians' growing reluctance to embark on costly foreign adventures like Afghanistan, and the coming 1992 economic integration in Europe, the Rapallo scenario appears increasingly as science fiction. At any rate, the US would never have allowed anything of the kind from turning into a real possibility. For a more balanced analysis, focusing on cultural realities rather than dubious historical parallels, see Russell Berman, "The Vienna Fascination," in *Telos* 68 (Summer 1968), pp. 7-38.

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the particular interests of intellectuals. Unwilling to represent itself as such, and deprived of its claim to universality, this unhappy radical consciousness had to figure out a way to pull the revolutionary rabbit out of the theoretical hat. Without a revolutionary otherness to objectify its vision, it had to invent one in order to retain its identity. It managed, but in the process it was forced to become something else. Unable to penetrate its arbitrarily designated otherness, it became part and parcel of that administrative apparatus it otherwise pretended to challenge.

Inadvertently, a funny thing happened to the dialectic on the one-way street supposedly leading to the classless society. When it became impatient and tried to accelerate a pace it deemed much too slow, by substituting the peasantry for the proletariat, it ended up derailed to the Gulag. When it stayed the course, it waded into the quicksands of an advanced capitalist society which instrumentalized it to change everything, only to retain predominant relations of domination unchanged. Unable to have what they loved, in both cases radicals reluctantly learned to love what they had. They turned in their badges and most of them did well as social engineers secretly or openly hoping to fine-tune their tendentially totally-administered societies into socialism. Others did even better as critics in universities, think-tanks and research institutes, where their work was less impaired by ubiquitous bureaucratic constraints. But their roles remained the same: that of external mediators, whose administered negativity covertly promised to regulate what it overtly attacked. This anti-climatic story, however, has an even worse ending. The institutionalized negativity generated by a radical thought integrated within the bureaucratic apparatus turned out to be artificial in a more counterproductive sense. Paralyzed by its administrative internalization, it could not even fulfill its unintended covert regulatory role — a function which, paradoxically enough, it may have been able to discharge had it managed to retain its autonomy. Thus, instead of overtly representing the "other" with which it still identified, or even covertly reinforcing the "same" from which it derived its livelihood, it fell victim to identity logic and ended up merely duplicating the given.

Many traditional 68ers found themselves entangled in this unenviable predicament. Unwilling to play the despised passive role of "beautiful souls," they tried at all costs to make a recalcitrant post-modern reality dance to their old dialectical tune. Confronted with the dilemma of an increasingly administered society which had effectively reintegrated all otherness, they found themselves alone. So they tried to make do with what they had, and redefined what constitutes radical agencies or

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"anti-systemic forces." What became more important than genuine radical credentials was whether the new candidates had any real chance of succeeding. They wanted a winner. Thus they not only mistook the social debris generated by a rapidly changing system for the foundations of redemption, they also ended up summarily dismissing whatever faint utopianism periodically surfaced — but not long enough or sufficiently strong to pass for *successful* "anti-systemic forces."

Since women and blacks had managed to establish powerful lobbies after they were legitimated as corporate bodies by civil rights legislation, they were reluctantly bestowed with the onerous role of revolutionary agencies.[32] The counterculture, on the other hand, had not done as well, even though it did manage to briefly articulate subjectivity's need for self-realization and prefigure an alternative mode of existence. Subsequently instrumentalized by Hollywood, Calvin Klein and the Pepsi Generation, this counterculture never managed to recover from the drug-induced stupor that checkmated it out of politics in the early 1970s. So traditional 68ers no longer even bother to examine its radical credentials. It is summarily disqualified as a *bona fide* "political" legacy and reduced to the level of a minor epiphenomenal nuisance — one of those youthful paroxysms that unavoidably explode in the spontaneous development of "serious" revolutionary movements.

These conclusions are not reached as the result of any detailed analysis of the genesis, structure and social function of the new movements, but are deduced uncritically from the facticity of a corporatist *Realpolitik*. Given the extent to which the government has allegedly caved in to their demands, the revolutionary character of women and blacks is presumably *obvious*. Similarly *obvious* is the merely "euphoric" nature of the counterculture, now demonized with having precipitated the moral relativism responsible for the rise in crime, AIDS and the drug epidemic. The *obvious*, however, always hides unexamined assumptions,

32. Wallerstein actually did better than this. Unlike most other traditional 68ers, who eventually settled *only* for women, blacks and maybe a few other marginal minorities, Wallerstein went out of his way to scrape up everything he could find from the bottom of the political barrel. Thus trade-unions and Social-Democratic parties (and even Leninism in the Soviet context) are identified as "anti-systemic" forces. Apparently, only Rockefeller and Satan remain commited to the infamous "system." In this, however, Wallerstein is not alone. Most traditional 68ers share this irresistible urge to throw every group and the kitchen sink into various versions of the Rainbow Coalition, which appear thereby as absolutely invincible. For example, in a fit of unrestrained Old Left nostalia, Katsiaficas even recycles the traditional working class as the revolutionary leadership in his particular blend of the Rainbow Coalition (see Katsiaficas, *op. cit*. p. 217).

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whose demystification is usually fatal for whatever arguments are built upon them. While not in any way created by some conspiratorial governmental strategy, these movements fit all too well within the logic of the system to which they immediately contributed as integral parts. The problem is that they regulated a phase of development that had already become historically obsolete — the New Deal era of bureaucratic management — and became obstacles in the development of a new phase which, partly as a result, has not quite yet materialized, notwithstanding the efforts of the Nixon, and Reagan administrations. At any rate, these movements "anti-systemic" character is by no means self-evident and ends up being arbitrarily postulated as a figment of traditional 68ers' overactive "revolutionary" imagination.

What unreconstructed 68ers are unable and unwilling to understand is that there is absolutely *nothing* inherent in capitalism as such that requires the perpetuation of racism — a cultural residue entailing that one or more social sectors retain their ethnic particularity, thus constituting an unhomogenized "other" separate from the rest of the population. On the contrary, given the system's need for manipulable consumers and disciplined producers in a society not quite totally administered only because of a sociological version of the principle of complementarity, i.e., the logical impossibility of being at the same time both rational *and* totally administered, there is plenty which runs against tolerating any particularity and otherness like racial specificity.[33] Far from being an inextricable part of the capitalist logic of domination, racism is not merely an annoying historical residue, but an obstacle in the constitution of a truly totally administered society. It disturbs the logic of rationalized unequal exchange with extraneous irrational differences. It is not surprising, therefore, that it is difficult to find anything revolutionary (i.e., necessitating a qualitative change of

33. As Horkheimer and Adorno argued in what amounts to another formulation of the predicament John Dewey and the rest of the pragmatists called the "naturalistic fallacy," the abstract rationality of the Enlightenment that forces reality to correspond to the logic of the concept is but the other side of the fetishism of commodities. Everything is quantified so as to facilitate exchange. Heterogeneous being is forced to conform to homogeneous thought. In this process, typical of what in the earlier part of this century was derided as "bourgeois ideology" but today is stylized neutrally as merely "modernity," there is no room for particularity. Horkheimer and Adorno deployed this to explain the Holocaust, but it applies equally to race and gender relations in the US. The objective was not simply genocide, as in the particular case of Nazi Germany, where it was merely a *means*, but of *eliminating* any difference, whether by extermination or integration (of course, once difference is naturalistically reduced to the biological argument level of race, it can no longer be eliminated through integration,

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the system in order to bring about its elimination), in the opposition to racial discrimination. This explains why the civil rights movement was, from the very beginning, heavily funded by agencies of alleged capitalist agitprop, such as the Ford Foundation, and, Left claims to the contrary notwithstanding, vigorously enforced by the federal government once it became an obstacle to further capitalist rationalization in the South. There is nothing anti-systemic in demanding a "fair" share of the socio-economic pie. Rather, this is part of the very logic of the market and an integral part of "the American way."

The same goes for women. After the automation of housework shortly after WWII and the introduction of the pill in the early 1960s to help regulate family size, the traditional housewife found herself functionally redundant. Within a system that recognized people only as abstract labor-power, it was almost natural for women to join the labor force at a faster pace than ever before. In doing so, however, they were confronted with considerable *cultural* opposition. Social roles and expectations did not immediately change with this redefinition of economic functions. The women's movement successfully rationalized the cultural sphere which, mechanical Marxists to the contrary notwithstanding, stubbornly refuses to merely reflect the economic base. While this rationalization did cause considerable disruption in social relations, it did not have any negative impact on an economic system for which gender is but another irrelevant attribute.

These alleged "anti-systemic" forces did eventually contribute to the system's rationality crisis, but not in their original oppositional role. When the women's movement (as well as the civil rights movement)

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and extermination remains the only option). The objective is ultimately the same: homogenization. Thus "the victims are interchangeable according to circumstances — gypsies, Jews, Protestants, Catholic, and so on. . .," and the methods contingent. Cf. Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of the Enlightenment* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1972), p. 171. In this broad sense, Nazism, Stalinism and the New Deal, for all their differences, can be classified as structurally isomorphic phenomena and, from the viewpoint of the logic of the system, the genocide of Jews, the extermination of the Kulaks, and the integration of blacks (or the erasure of gender differences) have all the same general function. Horkheimer and Adorno, however, unwittingly universalized the logic of *one* phase of capitalist development, that of state centralization and planning to guarantee the conditions necessary to further development, to apply unconditionally to capitalism as such. They were wrong. As a modern version of that *complexio oppositorum* Carl Schmitt used to describe the Catholic Church, capitalism seems to be quite able to integrate almost anything, including heterogeneity — artificial or otherwise — when it appears opportune to do so (as can be seen by the ease with which so-called "post-modern thought" has smoothly turned into one of the system's most sophisticated ideologies).

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discovered that even full integration only generated an abstract universalism, which left women at a compatitive disadvantage and had little to do with their particular predicament, it reversed its position.[34] The universalism of the original movement gave way to the particularism of a more embattled feminist movement, concerned no longer with achieving formal equality but with vindicating women's specificity and redefining the predominant unfavorable *modus operandi*. Unlike the previous demand for mere formal equality, however, "affirmative action" did not feed smoothly into the logic of the market. It presupposed, as conditions for implementing and enforcing its provisions, an expansion of the same bureaucratic apparatus whose penetration of everyday life, in the process of erasing all particularity and otherness and thus creating the homogenized labor and consumer markets needed by the new system of mass production, had managed to obliterate that minimal organic negativity required for self-regulation. Instead of contributing to a *reduction* of the increasingly wasteful and irrational state, which embodies all of the system's traditional evils, the "new and improved" social movements ended up contributing to its further *extension*.

In this sense, feminism (and its functional equivalent, black nationalism), did eventually become obstacles to the solution of the overall rationality crisis. The corporatist pseudo-universalization of their particularistic interests (affirmative action) contradicted the system's legitimacy, still based on abstract universalism. Far from constituting a break with the system's abstract universalism, which had been under considerable attack as an ideology occluding substantive injustices, the legal justification for affirmative action legislation was framed throughout in the very same language. Thus it extended the existing logic of domination by, at best, merely amending it to accomodate a very limited tokenism; at the same time, it intensified the broader rationality crisis by widening the gap between the abstract universalism of affirmative action legislation and the practical particularistic way in which

34. As the ideology of the Enlightenment, universalism was the capitalist ideology *par excellence*. Thus it not only legitimated relations of domination and privilege but, as Bauman has shown in his excellent reconstruction of the trajectory of the Jewish experience, it also became the ideology of minorities seeking entry into previously restricted social spaces. (See Zygmunt Bauman, "Exit Visas and Entry Tickets. Paradoxes and Antinomies of Assimilation: The Jewish Experience," in this issue of *Telos*). As such, the very adherence to this universalist ideology further identified the minorities in question as *particular* groups. Eventually, after *de facto* social integration precipitated by the New Deal had rendered obsolete *any* particularism, it no longer mattered.

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it was implemented. The result was a delegitimation of what appeared increasingly as a patently fraudulent administrative apparatus and a reprivatization of those middle classes irreversibly commited to abstract universalism. The grassroots backlash that followed has been fueled by a resurgent racism and anti-feminism much more difficult to eradicate than earlier varieties. Unlike in the past, the new racism and anti-feminism is not based on traditional bigotry or misogyny, but on what is broadely perceived as state-supported particularism.

Far from benefiting either blacks or women *collectively*, the *de facto* consummation of this corporatist compromise has contributed to a further deterioration of the quality of life of all but the privileged few able to take advantage of these measures. The massive growth of the underclass and the feminization of poverty are only two of the most visible unintended consequences of perpetuating structural inequities while only defusing the symptoms. Thus the overwhelming majority of women and blacks not only did not benefit from affirmative action, but suffered from all its debilitating and destabilizing consequences — the migration of middle class blacks from the ghetto, delegitimation and disintegration of traditional institutions based on particularism, no fault divorce, etc. As a privilege whose continued legitimacy is based on the perpetuation of generalized inequality, affirmative action stabilized what it was meant to eliminate. Furthermore, those who benefit from it have no interest in seeing it abolished, along with the conditions that originally justified it. The previously organic negativity of the affirmative action wing of these movements in spearheading the emancipation of *all* women became thereby artificial when it turned into a mere tool to facilitate the upward mobiliy of a privileged group of middle-class career women and blacks.

Somewhere Over the Rainbow Bureaucrats Fly. . .

Traditional civil society, systematically rationalized and thus deprived of whatever autonomy might have presented obstacles to the predominant homogenizing logic, never had an opportunity to reconstitute itself on the basis of new organic relations. Alienated from the social context within which they originally arose by the same rapid capitalist rationalization, traditional values had long since lost touch with the new colonized lifeworld. Contrary to the Habermasian born-again liberals, this process could not be tackled by further rationalizing the lifeworld without falling prey to that identity logic Adorno warned against. Mimesis with nature requires prevention of any colonization

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qua rationalization of that lifeworld which, contrary to Habermas, is pre-linguistic, pre-scientific, and pre-rational. Any additional penetration of the system's abstract universalism into the presently already critically impoverished lifeworld would only result in extending that cretinization responsible for the system's never-resolved rationality crisis. It is the lifeworld which has to rationalize the system rather than the other way around. This reconstitution of the social fiber necessary to establish new organic bonds between living subjective aspirations and a coherent normative framework subsequently translatable into new institutional arrangements has not happened. This is why the most debilitating legacy of 1968 is the counterculture's failure to conquer sufficient social space and time in which to construct alternative institutions which would eventually either qualitatively change the logic of the system or rationalize it at least sufficiently to alleviate much of the unnecessary suffering, waste and systemic irrationality.

The collapse of the counterculture and of the New Left as a result of nihilistic self-destruction, Old Left political manipulation, violent repression and system integration fragmented its emancipatiry thrust into a myriad of conflicting and often contradictory demands. Subsequently, these were mechanically translated into affirmative action concessions according to the linear logic of the bureaucratic apparatus and had, as their counterproductive long-range effect, the sapping of the movements' potential organic negativity. By successfully severing the well-rewarded, upwardly-mobile affirmative action wings of these movements from the overwhelming majority of their alleged constituency, the system succeeded in mechanically integrating their most vocal and aggressive members at the expense of the rest, whose predicaments both deteriorated and lost whatever legitimacy they had. By legitimating the predominant meritocratic system, the new corporatist compromise gave its stamp of approval to lingering inequalities and injustices.

The failure of the counterculture to reconstitute a new version of the eroded traditional civil society had an even more debilitating impact on the system itself in that it also shortcircuited a long-range solution to the predominant rationality crisis. With whatever negativity these movements initially articulated now effectively bureaucratized, the system remained checkmated between a better-integrated (although less competent as a result of lowering standards to meet new quota requirements) yet still all-pervasive bureaucracy lacking effective control mechanisms and stuck with a passive clientilistic citizenry. Worse yet, partly as a result of the dilution of its earlier abstract universalism by

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means of the new *de facto* corporatist compromises, the increasingly inept administrative apparatus is even less able to manage a debilitated civil society, which today is more disintegrated than it was two decades ago. And it is precisely this state of affairs that has frustrated the Republican strategy of re-privatization and simultaneous de-bureaucratization. Without a reconstituted civil society sufficiently strong to sustain social tasks previously carried out by a central authority, it turned out to be impossible to launch a post-New Deal model of social organization predicated on a reconstituted individualism and new visions.

Traditional 68ers in general also vindicate the virtues of a strong civil society against state administration, which have almost universally become agencies of domination and repression. Without the contribution of the counterculture (or some other equivalent agency of social renewal) to the reconstitution of the social fiber, however, this call rings hollow. Lacking any new countercultural content other than variations and extensions of the already deployed affirmative action corporatist compromises, the civil society contradictorily envisioned by traditional 68ers (who simultaneously also call for a bigger and better state apparatus) becomes indistinguishable from the present neo-conservative version: a new and improved version of the present one.

Not surprisingly, the allegedly conservative turn of the 1980s has failed to reverse those exaggerated New Deal aberrations Reagan successfully campained against, or to implement the kind of regressive social agenda the New Right proposed as an answer to the countercultural revival. Paralyzed by an administrative apparatus which succesfully outmaneuvered the reformist thrust of 1968, today any administration finds itself doomed to merely extending the deadening logic of the given. Only the successful manipulation of unforseen future crises precipitated by the same old bureaucratic apparatus may create the conditions necessary to checkmate the managerial elite and place on the agenda once again the question of qualitative reforms. Contrary to traditional 68ers' fantasies, however, the future will not be like the past unless, of course, they have a significant role in its gestation.

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Exit Visas and Entry Tickets: Paradoxes of Jewish Assimilation

Zygmunt Bauman

Modernity emancipated individual life from collective destiny. However, there were few, if any, straight roads in modern Jewish history, and no family or class traditions were strong enough to streamline the fate of the descendants. From the fortresses of ossified Chassidism, prophets of universalistic revolution could emerge, and the paragons of successful assimilation could beget luminaries of a Judaic renaissance. In trying to explain the oscillation of the Jewish emancipatory drive between the apparent extremes of assimilation and revolution, a few well-known facts about Gershom Scholem and Isaac Deutscher are worth remembering as cautionary tales.[1]

Scholem's father decided to hold the *bar mitzvah* for his son at his *14th* birthday. He was aghast when Gershom declared he did not need a tutor to read those few Hebrew sentences the Rabbi required from young "Germans of Mosaic Religion" on the occasion. For his *bar mitzvah*, Deutscher wrote a learned disputation on whether the spittle of the legendary bird *Kilion* (which, in Talmudic legend, visits the earth every 70 years and spits only once on each visit)[2] was kosher. The disputation was delivered in the presence of 100 learned Rabbis, who unanimously pronounced the child prodigy worthy of rabbinical honors. Scholem received the first photograph of his hero, Theodor Herzl, as a gift under the

1. Cf. Gershom Scholem, *From Berlin to Jerusalem: Memories of my Youth* (New York: Schocken Books, 1980); Isaac Deutscher, *The Non-Jewish Jew and Other Essays* (New York: Oxford University Press 1968).

2. The Israeli Language Academy has actually used this name to coin the word "ephemeral," which was missing from Hebrew.

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Christmas Tree — left there, perhaps, by Father Chanukkah. With great reluctance, Deutscher's father agreed to his son's late evening visits to a secular secondary school — after, of course, devoting his mornings and afternoons to the study of the *Torah* and the *Talmud*. In Scholem's home, the use of Jewish expressions was strictly prohibited (this included rendering Yiddish idioms into the most elegant German). The Deutschers dreamed of bringing their son up at the court of the great *Tsadik* of Góra Kalwaria. A common feature in Scholem's and Deutscher's childhoods was the name Oświecim. Gershom was attracted by the names of distant and exotic destinations written on railway cars. Oświecim was one of them, and so were Eindhoven and Hook van Holland. Oświecim was also the next large town to Deutscher's native Chrzanów. Isaac's father used to clip unsavory ambitions with his favorite adage: "Son, you only have to go beyond Auschwitz and you will be totally lost." There was yet another common feature. Scholem and Deutscher matured towards very different, even opposite, attitudes toward Judaic lore. Perhaps they did not differ that much, however, in their longing for the radical renewal of the world, the millenial upturn of human fate, the *tikkun*.[3] Scholem and Deutscher did travel in opposite directions, yet what prompted them and kept them going was not all that dissimilar.

The Pent-up Revolution

The Judaic scholarship of which Scholem became both the founder and the unsurpassed master is very far from the academic, contemplative interpratation of biblical wisdom Maimonides authoritatively codified. It is even further away from that positivistic *clean-up* of the Judaic tradition busily promoted by modern historians and theologians concerned with scientific respectability and political ambitions of national self-effacement. Scholem's Judaism was reorganized around exactly those elements in the Jewish tradition the dominant scholarship, bent on demonstrating the immanent rationality and orderliness of Jewish lore, could only view as shameful aberrations and (the facts of the matter notwithstanding) marginalized as insignificant and expendable.

The *Wissenschaft* school dismissed these elements as temporary and inconsequential flights of fancy: prejudices and superstitions modernity (including Jewish modernity) will inevitably cast aside on its march toward the unchallenged rule of reason. To the horror of official scholarship,

3. *Tikkun* — in Lurianic Kabbalah, the reestablishment of the harmonious conditions of the world destroyed by the loss of the Divine spark.

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it was precisely this alleged failure of reason, the momentary loss of nerve suffered by basically reasonable and sober people, that Scholem made the focal point of his Judaism and that, more than anything, proved responsible for the survival and astonishing viability of the Judaic tradition over centuries of oppression and suffering.

Why Jewish mysticism? Why Kabbalah? Why the periodic outbursts of messianic urge? A few years ago Olsen[4] analyzed the relation between *utopianism* and *millenarianism*. Utopian thought stops at the description of the perfect order. It does not deal with the process leading from the here and now to the superior world looming on the other side of history. Utopian thought can afford such an oversight because it assumes that the ideal world can come, if at all, only pulled by a supra-human and supra-historical force — be it God, Reason, or the indomitable march of Progress. Millenarian thought, on the other hand, is all about the process: about the traveling rather than the arrival. The right order is the culmination of work and struggle, not unlike the one we know — an event in real history. Like other historical events, it has its causes and its obstacles. Therefore, it matters a lot what its future beneficiaries do to bring it about or to clear the way for it. Unlike the utopian paradise, the millenarian one (even if pre-ordained by supra-human forces) cannot rely solely on the inscrutable, subterranean work of a supra-human force. Rather, it sees human will and action as part of such a force.

"Nothing historical can relate itself on its own account to anything Messianic" — observed Scholem's friend, Walter Benjamin. But he hastened to qualify that despairing quietism which the contemplation of the gap would have legitimated: "If one arrow points to the goal toward which the profane dynamics acts, and another marks the direction of Messianic intensity, then certainly the quest of free humanity for happiness runs counter to the Messianic direction; but just as a force can, through acting, increase another that is acting in the opposite direction, so the order of the profane assists, through being profane, the coming of the Messianic Kingdom."[5] If, in this *Theologico-Political Fragment*, Benjamin sought the way from the theology of Messianic *dreams* to the politics of revolutionary *action*, he found it in the non-rabbinical teachings of Jewish mysticism, where utopia turns into millenarianism and the Messiah into *messianic intensity*.

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4. Theodore Olsen, *Millenarianism, Utopianism, and Progress* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), pp. 265 ff..

5. Walter Benjamin, *One-Way Street and Other Writings*, trans. by Edmund Jephcott and Kingsley Shorter (London: Verso, 1985), p. 155.

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At the beginning of his study of the Messianic idea, Scholem informs the reader that, for Jews, redemption is a *public event*, which takes place in history and within the community. The awaiting of the Messiah was always part of Jewish consciousness. The price of this awaiting was the endemic provisionality of Jewish history: "There is something grand about living in hope, but at the same time there is something profoundly unreal about it." Jewish life was a life lived in deferment, a life "in which nothing can be done definitely, nothing can be irrevocably accomplished." Yet, for a good part of Jewish history, the Messianic dream "was not always accompanied by the determination to do something for its realization. On the contrary, it is one of the most important characteristics of Messianism that to the minds of a great many there was an abyss here. And this is not surprising since precisely in the biblical texts . . . it is nowhere made dependent upon human activity." The yawning gap between Messianic redemption and daily life must have been difficult to square with the idea of redemption as a temporal and communal event, and with the unquestionable certainty of the coming of the Messiah. It could only generate tension; and it must have created temptations difficult to resist. Indeed, "over and over the revolutionary opinion that this attitude (of passive expectation) deserves to be overrun breaks through in the Messianic actions of individuals or entire movements."[6]

After 1492, growing frustration with Messianic expectations paved the way for the blending of the Kabbalah's abstruse and contemplative mysticism with Messianic redemption. For the first time, a bridge was built between the final stage of redemption and the contemporaneity of human action — between then and now. And this was not a one-time event. It has been and must be undertaken again and again. It is a compulsion rooted in the spirit of the *tikkun*, which is what the existence of Jewish mysticism is all about. "The movement that went forth from Safed (the birth place of Lurianic Kabbalah) required about three generations to gain general acceptance. But after that, one generation, fully imbued with these Messianic conceptions, was enough to create a situation in which a Messiah who seemed to fit these ideas could find a wide-ranging echo."[7] From the boiling point to which the Kabbalah brought the dreams of redemption, Sabbatai Zvi took over. And as for Jacob Frank, who needed another Frank in the times which followed his downfall? After all, these were to be the times lived in the shadow of the

6. Gershom Scholem, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1971), pp. 1, 35, 14, 15.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 59.

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Greatest Redeemer of all, Napoleon Bonaparte, with his code and his Act of Emancipation. In Feuchtwanger's *Jewish War*, Joseph Flavius greets Vespavian at the gates of Jerusalem as the Messiah, who announced the era of universal humanity. With the same universal message, Napoleon preempted the task of future Messiahs. He was redemption. Redemption was now to be called *emancipation* — at least until frustration would also catch up with it in this new disguise.

Scholem was fully aware of the dynamite stored in mystic fantasy. More than once he asked himself about the sources of this explosive force. He also pondered whether the explosives were alien entities smuggled into the warehouse of Jewish tradition and illegitimately hidden among reputable merchandise, or rather a compound easely created by mixing certain readily available native ingredients. He opted for the second explanation. Of the three forces in rabbinical Judaism — conservative, restorative, and utopian — the last two, the urge to recreate ideal past conditions and the dream of a hitherto non-existing world, tended periodically to blend into the Messianic idea.

Scholem's friend Benjamin had an answer to why that should be the case: prohibited from investigating the future, for Jews "every second of time was the straight gate through which the Messiah might enter." Once delegitimated as a subject for study, the future was compressed into the present, which made it pregnant and about to give birth. The Messiah was not the light at the end of the long tunnel stretching far ahead and unexplored. He was always here or nowhere; always now or never. One had to be ready for his arrival, like one gets ready for the return of Elijah by putting an extra chalice on the Passover table. Faith in the Messiah did not require insights into the unforseeable future. It was permanently fed and renewed "by the image of enslaved ancestors rather than of liberated grandchildren." Progress was an inherently Jewish idea, always floating just below the surface of the apparently stagnant waters of timeless tradition. According to Benjamin's often quoted passage, progress is what we call that storm which "irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward."[8]

Antinomies of Emancipation

Emancipation was not something imposed on Jews from outside. Nor did it catch the Jews unprepared. It came while Jews waited, and grew

8. Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, trans. by Harvey Zohn (London: Fontana, 1979), pp. 266, 262, 260.

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ever more impatient. Universality is the war-cry of the underprivileged. Modernity promised to strip everyone of their parochial clothing, liberating them by reducing them to pure human essence.

Jews were *underprivileged*. And they were underprivileged *universally*. One wonders the extent to which they served for Marx as the prototype of proletarians whose emancipation he described as the model and the condition of the good society. Marx's proletarians had no homeland. They were oppressed everywhere, and their suffering was truly universal. The overcoming of that suffering was to be the first truly universal act of history: an act which would abolish all localized and particularized suffering. By the same token, particularity was an enemy of emancipation, so the kingdom of universality could be attained only at the price of annihilating Judaism: that most particular of particularities; particularity *as such*. To Marx, Judaism stood condemned as the carrier of a money economy — the inexhaustible source of all particularity, division, and conflict. Emancipation meant universality, and universality meant emancipation of society from Jewry.

This version of the modern idea of emancipation need not be seen as a particularly Jewish contribution. Yet, more than any other, the plight of Jews could provide an experience likely to be processed into the concept of universality as redemption. The Jews, in Deutscher's poignant words, "dwelt on the borderlines of various civilizations, religions and national cultures . . . they lived on the margins . . . of their respective nations." As for the great Jewish prophets of universality, like Spinoza, Heine, Marx, or Rosa Luxemburg, "each of them was in society and yet not in it. It was this that enabled them to rise in thought above their societies, above their nations, above their times and generations, and to strike out mentally into wide new horizons and far into the future."[9] The idea of redemption through universality was as much at home in Jewish history as the idea of progress.

It was the most perverse paradox of emancipation that, under the banner of universality, it promoted a new particularization. In practice, it meant the renunciation of a specific *Jewish* particularity: the one and only peculiarity which gave credence to the program of universalization. But the old particularity was to be renounced at the price of embracing a new one, be it of a religious, national, or cultural kind. The old particularity was to be discarded so a new one could be celebrated. Unlike the old one, the new particularity would be an implacable enemy

9. Deutscher, *The Non-Jewish Jew*, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

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of universality. Tightly embraced, it would rule out any further dreams of universality. Anyway, such dreams would be prohibited.

There was an irreparable contradiction between the conditions which had to be met to obtain exit visas from the ghetto, and those which had to be observed to purchase entry tickets to universal humanity. As travelers were soon to discover to their dismay, the universal currency which bought exit visas was not honored by those selling entry tickets.

Furthermore, one was expected to proceed through the two stages of emancipation in radically different ways. Exit visas were a collective matter, whereas entry tickets had to be obtained individually. Community mobilization as a political (and economic) force was an asset during the first stage. It became a liability in the second. Communal resources which proved so useful in pulling down ghetto walls now barred entry into gentile quarters. Once granted full citizenship rights, Jewishness became a badge of shame. By Mendelsohn's advice, like the family dirty laundry which should never be washed in public, it was something one wisely kept at home. As a result, emancipation did not relieve tension; rather, it intensified it. As Lewin explained, "with the enlarging of the space of free movement, and with weakening of the pressure applied from without, the tension under which this group as a whole lives has doubtless decreased. But strange as it may appear at first, the decrease of tension has brought no real relaxation to the life of the Jew, but instead meant perhaps even higher tension in some respects . . . If we compare the position of the individual Jew in the Ghetto period with his position in modern times, we find that he now stands much more for and by himself . . . that time he felt the pressure to be applied to the Jewish group as a whole. Now as a result of the disintegration of the group, he is much more exposed to pressure as an individual."[10]

To add despair to suffering, the new state of affairs was a no-win situation. Those who felt confident enough to confront the tension on their own soon discovered that, contrary to the ostensible rules of the game, they were not *allowed* to do so. In the eyes of the majority which had emancipated them, they remained members of the accursed emancipated minority. They continued to carry the stigma of their membership for everyone to see. If they declared their disgust toward the less "individualized" members of the native community and refused to concern themselves with what the majority saw as their "humanization," they were branded as accomplices to the crime of

10. Kurt Lewin, *Resolving Social Conflicts* (London: Souvenir Press, 1973), p. 153.

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difference. If they succumbed to majority expectations and engrossed themselves in communal self-improvement, this were immediately taken as proof of their partaking of the collective stigma.[11] Heads you win, tails I lose. Thus there was only one thing left to do until it, too, was to be discredited: to lift one's own community to the level of the majority's standards — and to do it with such an uncompromising ardour that in some not-too-distant future the community might have dissolved (majority permitting) and disappeared altogether. In this case, the meaning of the lifting was to be unilaterally determined by the majority — or at least by the way in which the minority elite interprets the will of the majority.

The Allurements and Traps of Assimilation

In Mosse's words, "the age into which a minority is emancipated will to a large extent determine the priorities of its self-identification, not only at the time of emancipation itself but into the future as well."[12] The legal emancipation of Western Jews took place in the heyday of the Enlightenment, in the midst of hopes to replace the prisoners of parochial prejudices with the members of the human race. The Enlightenment put forth emancipation-through-universalization as a viable project, and simultaneously offered a foolproof method for implementing it: culture, *Bildung*, self-improvement. The method involved the acquisition of everything good worth acquiring, and the suppression of everything bad which deserved to be suppressed. The dividing line between good and bad was drawn most emphatically in the realm of manners. *L'honnête homme* was, first and foremost, a man of refinement. Accordingly, the emancipated Jews who could afford the price of the entry tickets to the new, and hopefully universalistic, human race defined the state of emancipation as that of *Sittlichkeit* — refined and respectable manners like cleanliness, closely observed sexual etiquette, inobtrusive conduct in public places. And they saw the royal road to this condition as the process of *Veredelung der Israeliten*. To be a man rather than an outsider or a member of a stigmatized minority meant to be able to control one's passions, to keep one's nerves in check, to be strong (yet not overbearing) in body and mind.

The Jews who took the Enlightenment on its word and identified

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11. This could be called, after the sociologist who carefully studied it, "the Dench dilemma." See Geoff Dench, *Minorities in the Open Society: Prisoners of Ambivalence* (London: Routledge, 1986), pp. 127-32.

12. George L. Mosse, "Jewish Emancipation: Between *Bildung and Respectablity*," in *The Jewish Response to German Culture: From the Enlightenment to the Second World War*, Jewuda Reinharz and Walter Schatzberg, eds. (Boston: University Press of New England, 1986), p. 1.

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emancipation with refinement of manners and, more generally, with self-cultivation, had become cultural fanatics. In every Western nation they were the ones who treated national cultural heritage most seriously — in fact, more seriously than expected (mostly as means of national mobilization and state legitimation). Trying to excel in the complex and often elusive task ahead, they sung the praises of national monuments and masterpieces of national art and literature, only to find that the audience comprised mostly people similar to themselves. They read avidly and voratiously, only to find they could discuss what they read only with other *aspiring* Germans or Frenchmen like themselves. Far from bringing them closer to assimilation, conspicuous cultural enthusiasm and obsessive display of cultural nobility set them aside from the native middle class and, if anything, supplied further evidence of their ineradicable *foreignness*. "The entrance of Jewry as a collective into the body of German society did not mean real integration into any part, stratum, or section of it. It meant, rather, the creation of a separate subgroup which conformed to the German middle class in some of its characteristics."[13] What more than anything else kept the assimilating Jews apart from any established section of the majority was precisely their assimilatory zeal, which twisted their eagerly observed conformity into an all-too-salient and resented game of pretensions.

Cultural creativity and cultural performance are by definition public affairs and highly visible. Yet it was precisely in this sphere that, as a rule, the assimilating Jews were heavily overrepresented. "Jews who aspired to social acceptance but had difficulty entering German circles may have found sitting in a mixed audience in the concert hall and theatre a convenient way of demonstrating their membership in society at large. Reading at home lacked, of course, this public dimension."[14] As this strategy was followed with a regularity paradoxical (though not unexpected) for a group propelled by the idea of assimilation as an essentially *individual activity*, the theatergoers, concert addicts and devoted art patrons mixed mostly with each other. In many German or French cultural centers, symphonic concerts and theater premieres came to play the same social role for the assimilating Jews as the weekly ritual of high church service played for the gentile part of the middle class.

The self-destructive tendency of assimilation also effected occupations. Whatever other preferences they may have had for legal or medical

13. Jacob Katz, "German Culture and the Jews," in *The Jewish Response to German Culture*, *op. cit.*, p. 85.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 90.

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careers, they offered particular attractions to assimilating Jews as "free" professions, which could be practiced individually and independently of discriminatory employment policies. In addition, the cult of individuality permeating the professions' *esprit de corps* chimed well with the interpretation of assimilation as a task to be performed singly and aimed at emancipation from communal fetters. The unplanned outcome of this double attraction was again an over-representation of Jews in the professions, and a new set of arguments to prove the Jews' permanent distinctiveness. The abandoning of traditional Jewish occupations, which from the assimilants' viewpoint meant *Entjudung* (de-judaization of "men as such") appeared to the baffled native public more like the process of *Verjudung* (judaization of heretofore gentile areas).[15]

It is no wonder that, throughout Western Europe it was the rapidly assimilating, reformed and cultivated Jews who became the butt of new forms of anti-Semitism. The Enlightenment had sanctioned the emancipation of Jews as individuals and condemned Judaism as a distinct form of collective life. The assimilators, who earnestly accepted this in letter and spirit, found post-Enlightenment society living according to principles contrary to the declared ones. Modern society found it much easier to absorb traditional Jewish communities, which observed their orthodox ways and rejoiced in their conspicuous distinctiveness. It had a more difficult time coming to terms with the consuming, boundary-blurring mobility of "non-Jewish Jews" which, among other things, also compromised the much-needed security hitherto based on unproblematic belonging. Under the double pressure of gentile resentment and the inner paradoxes of the assimilatory drive, the assimilated culture enthusiasts manuevered themselves into a situation exactly the opposite of the one they sought. According to Volkov's perceptive observation, "despite themselves, they were made into a partly segregated social element, though theirs was not a community of social exclusiveness but the social attraction among the likes."[16]

It was hoped that emancipation[17] would lead to the complete

15. Steven E. Ascheim, "The Jew Within The Myth of *Judaization* in Germany" in *ibid.*, pp. 212 ff..

16. Shulamit Volkov, "The Dynamics of Dissimilation: The *Ostjuden* and German Jews" in *ibid.*, p. 200.

17. The *Jewish* emancipation: a term introduced into public debate after 1828, in emulation of the *Catholic* Emancipation Bill in England which permitted the Oath of Allegiance to be taken in all Christian denominations, rather than merely Protestant ones. From the very beginning, however, this parallel was inadequate, since the disabilities to be rectified by the postulated Jewish emancipation were more profound and of an altogether different kind than those suffered by Catholics in Britain.

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amalgamation of Jews with their gentile neighbors. The immediate outcome of *legal* equality was the emergence of what Katz called a semi-neutral society, "where the inferior status of the Jews was ignored by conscious effort rather than eliminated by actual equality." Enlightened Jews weakened their bonds with traditional community. Yet, in order to satisfy their new unorthodox needs, they had to "find their own circles." Even after formal emancipation was followed by the rise of liberalism, *social* emancipation "remained a far cry from the vision that had sustained Jews when they first started to leave behind the boundaries of their traditional society. . . Jews, even in countries where they had obtained political freedom, were economically advanced, and assimilated culturally, remained separate, even conspicuously so."[18] Besides gentile rejection, assimilants confronted problems they shared only with other people in the same position, who consequently understood them best and whose friendship they consciously or unconsciously sought.

From this truly "catch 22" plight there was no guaranteed escape. Heine could still explain his conversion to Christianity in terms of the role of baptism as the ticket to the modern world. As modernity progressed, such tickets, though still available, ceased to guarantee entry. Toward the end of the 19th century, conversions decreased. No doubt, one reason was the general decline of religious beliefs and the gradual "privatization" of denominational loyalty. In France, where the separation of church and state became a central political issue, "one obtained the ticket to assimilation not through baptism but rather, in part at least, through an avowed transcendence of formal religious beliefs."[19] But there was another, arguably more important, reason. Partly because of the Jews' formidable territorial and occupational mobility following their legal emancipation, and partly as a result of the spectacular success of assimilation (at least in its external aspects), the boundary-keeping (and hence segregatory) concerns of most communities could no longer be maintained by means of old religious criteria, which rendered membership ultimately dependent on individual choice. The very institution of conversion testified to the voluntary, subjective nature of belonging. Such a principle could not be reconciled with the modern drive toward national self-determination and the concern with boundary-drawing and boundary defence which followed it. Contrary to the modern

18. Jacob Katz, *Out of the Ghetto: The Social Background of Jewish Emancipation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), pp. 201-2.

19. Michael R. Marrus, *The Politics of Assimilation: A Study of the French Jewish Community at the Time of the Dreyfus Affair* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), pp. 60-1.

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assumption of the omnipotence of culture and education, drawing clear limits to the program of proselytization and segregating *external* categories (whose acculturation is neither feasible nor desirable) is as much an organic part of modern social organization as is the tendency to cultural crusades *within* the sought territory. This explains the new and distinct forms of modern anti-Semitism. The argument based on the fact that "they rejected Christ" no longer holds, since the "sin" can be readily remedied by simple repentance. In order to keep Jews securely off limits under conditions of legal emancipation, another criterion was needed: one which rendered cultural or religious conversion impotent, and subjective self-definition irrelevant. The sought principle of segregation was found in the idea of race, promoted by the science of the time but soon embraced by political elites concerned with guarding the frontiers of their dominion. With racism elbowing out traditional modes of Jewish estrangement, the remaining box offices offering tickets to the society of "men as such" were shut.

Thus the assimilating Jews did not cheat or otherwise fail to play the game according to the rules. Rather, the rules kept changing, so that every gain the hapless players made promptly became a loss. Having agreed at the start never to challenge the exclusive right of the casino owners to set the rules, and concerned with demonstrating above all their appreciation of the opportunities such rules create, converts to assimilation made themselves hostages to the same house managers whose unquestionable authority they swore to accept to legitimate their own success. They could not challenge that authority without sapping the foundation of their redemptive hopes. The project of assimilation turned out to be a trap. Without control over the rules, it was impossible to win. The closer success came, the more elusive it became. The currency of emancipation tended to be devalued or withdrawn from circulation faster than it could be hoarded.

Assimilation's Inner Demons

The assimilants did not catch on too quickly. In spite of evidence to the contrary, assimilation had its own momentum and enough encouraging episodes to keep spirits high and belief in the ultimate success untarnished. The striking feature of the assimilation drive was the participants' unshakeable conviction that the ultimate outcome was entirely in their hands: that the earnestness and persistence of their efforts made the difference between success or failure. This conviction was central to the project of redemption-through-assimilation and would not be abandoned or even critically examined without undermining the project itself,

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even when gathering clouds were about to cover whatever sky remained clear. Thus Reinach, the idol of French Jewish assimilationists, could insist after the potentially sobering Dreyfus affair: "The Jews, since they have ceased to be treated as pariahs, must identify themselves, in heart and in fact, with the nations which have accepted them, renounce their practices, the aspirations, the peculiarities of costume and language which tended to isolate them from their fellow citizens, in a word cease to be a despised nation, and henceforth be considered only a religious denomination."[20] False consciousness was the very condition of the project's ostensible feasibility and hence of its motivational potential.

False consciousness, however, cannot last long unless, in the face of adverse evidence, it is supported by auxiliary theories which provide the empirical foundation it otherwise lacks. The vexing elusiveness of the final objective had to be explained away: how else and better than by promoting the hosts' account of the failure. The host majority is extremely difficult to satisfy. It would be quick to point out that the ostensibly assimilated *citizen of Jewish origin* wears a mask too thin to be trusted; that, when scratched, the mask readily reveals the unprepossessing likeness of the uncivilized being the assimilants swore to have left behind. By far the most expedient way to divert the hosts' suspicions was to compete in casting aspersions on one's own discredited past.

Since assimilation was an individual affair, it never attracted all the Jews in any given country. However hard the assimilationists tried, there were always small residues of their former brethren too old, too pious, or just too poor or humble to take seriously the assimilatory option. Their presence did not worry the host population too much: it did not interfere with the majority's idea of order and power hierarchy. If anything, it reinforced the boundaries the majority cared about. But they were a sore in the assimilationists' eyes. They were too reminiscent of the assimilationists' own past, brought unscathed into the present for everybody to see. Unable to accept that what the majority really minded was that they pretended to be different, and not that their uncivilized co-religionists were what they were, the enthusiasts of assimilation sought in the otherness of the non-assimilated the explanation of their own lack of success. What followed was what Peter Gay once called the *selective anti-Semitism* of the assimilated Jews. If one could only convince native opinion that there were Jews and Jews, that they had even less in common than the hosts had with Jewry as such, and that the native majority

20. Theodore Reinach, *Histoire des israëlites depuis la ruine de leur independence nationale jusqu'à nos jours* (Paris: 1941), p. 306. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 94.

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and the assimilated Jews were for all practical purposes in one camp, jointly facing the common threat lurking in the uneducated and uneducable aliens of Jewish persuasion. In 1856, freshly ennobled Baron Erzel Ginzburg pleaded with the Russian Tsar on behalf of those Jews "who for many years developed the life, activities and resources of the country" against "the other classes of Jewry, who have not as yet given any evidence of their good intentions, usefulness and industry." He begged "the gracious monarch to distinguish the wheat from the chaff, and, as an encouragement to good and praiseworthy activity, to bestow a number of modest privileges upon the deserving and educated."[21]

For the assimilationists, however, a much more serious threat than their own local remnants of ghettoized Jewry were the Yiddish-speaking, orthodox masses of Eastern Jewry who, beginning with the second half of the 19th century, showed a frightening tendency to move West. Such a move would make the bottom fall out of the assimilationist project and turn all their good work into a truly Sisysphean task. The leftovers of the ghetto past would grow faster than they could possibly be exterminated and would become much too large to be swept under any conceivable rug. The Oriental Jew had become the incarnation of the inner demon in the assimilationist soul.

Every center of assimilation had its own "Oriental Jews." Contrary to widespread opinion, heavily influenced by the unanimity with which the Eastern threat was feared, there was no one specific cultural type of the Oriental Jew. People who fought tooth and nail against their own Orientals at home, might easily turn into abhorrent exemplars of the awesome Eastern threat once they moved a few hundred miles away. The "pushy beggars" or "Galician Schnorrers" of German Jewry were in their home country the gallant knights of European culture against the "Litwaks." The charges were not limited to cultural backwardness. In what was to be the universal pattern in the unhappy relation of assimilating Jewry with their respective *Ostjuden*, they accused the Litwaks for all the sins native opinion suspected them of. "A pronounced aversion to the so-called 'Litwaks' was evident throughout the history of the assimilationist process [in Polish lands]. They were accused of antipathy to Polish culture, being in favor of Russian culture, and of promoting Zionism."[22] When

21. Quoted in William J. Fishman, *East End Radicals 1875-1914* (London: Duckworth, 1975), p. 16.

22. Joseph Lichten, "Notes on the Assimilation and Acculturation of Jews in Poland 1863-1943" in *The Jews in Poland*, Chimen Abramsky, Maciej Jachimczyk and Anthony Polonsky, eds. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), p. 115.

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Polish socialists split into two parties, with only one firmly committed to Polish independence, Julian Unszlicht explained the Jewish preference for the other one in terms of the Litwaks' Russian sympathies.[23]

The inner demons of assimilation were patched together out of arguments used by native majorities to justify or rationalize, their urge to keep the assimilating Jews on the other side of an invisible, yet well guarded, social boundary. As the general assimilation project split into the specific tasks of overcoming the resentments of concrete national societies, so did the shape of the inner demons diversify to take account of the specific obstacles a given national opinion erected on the way to full amalgamation. The assimilants had to prove (or so they defined the task) that they were in complete agreement with the phobias and fully shared the rancors of dominant native opinion.

The neighbors inhabiting the lands East of the border were an easy focus for the rampant all-German nationalism of the Bismarckian era. As if anticipating Nazi rhetoric, they were described as carriers of diseases and epidemics, ordered to be deloused on crossing the German border, and often transported through the country in sealed trains allowed to stop only at properly equipped quarantine stations. In 1892 in Hamburg, and in 1894 in Marburg, new Jewish immigrants from Poland were blamed for outbreaks of cholera. Following the twisted logic of boundary building, the insalubrity of the Orientals was related to their pre-human cultural standards, barbaric language (the Polish language was disdained as "wretchedly degenerate," "unviable," "half-asiatic" and generally inferior), inborn restlessness and inability to harbor national feelings and loyalty.[24] Jewish enlightened opinion loyally followed the lead, complete with the oxymoronic logic with which the substance of stigma was depicted. On the one hand, Oriental Jews were charged with being "fully alien to German Jews by virtue of their customs, outlook, and way of life"; on the other, it was held against them that they tried to shed barbaric garb with the same thoroughness of which the assimilated German Jews were so proud. As the *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums* wrote on May 22, 1872, "Those Jews may be registered with the police as Jews, but their way of living is thoroughly un-Jewish. Once these people cross the Polish border and take off their long coats, they no longer observe

23. Jerzy Holzer, "Relations between Polish and Jewish Left-Wing Groups in Interwar Poland" in *The Jews in Poland*, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

24. The favorite subject of German caricaturists was the wondrous transformation of the Polish rag-peddler Moische Pisch into the Berlin haberdasher Moritz Wasserstrahl into the Parisian couturier Maurice La Fontaine. See Jack Wertheimer, *Unwelcome Strangers: East European Jews in Imperial Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 25-30.

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the Jewish law. The very people who lived so orthodox a life in Polish towns now have thrown overboard all Jewish laws."[25]

Politically, socially and psychologically, the hatred of recent Jewish immigrants had its uses — particularly as it provided an opportunity for sharing deeply-felt and publicly-vented feelings with the Germans. In Wertheimer's apt summary, "nothing, after all, unites one with others more than passion of a common enemy. Moreover, anti-Semitism had a special function in the German-Jewish psychic economy: hatred of outsiders diverted self-hatred to other targets. Finally, and most important: to construct this target for Jew-hatred would, many German Jews fondly believed, disarm German anti-Semitism altogether." Besides, "the newcomers threatened to revive an image of the Jew that natives had worked so hard to obliterate."[26]

German Jewry was not alone in possessing and fighting its inner demons. The *Ostjude* problem was in no way a phenomenon confined to German conditions and explicable in terms of the peculiarities of local Jewry or even particular features of German-Polish antagonisms. The ubiquity of strikingly similar obsessions, stereotypes and attitudes shows beyond reasonable doubt that the construction of an "unworthy Jew" and the strained and flustered reaction to all display of ostentatiously Jewish traits had little to do with local conditions and everything to do with the inner logic of the assimilation project. It was in terms of this project and this project alone that some Jews had to become "unworthy" and all affinity and intercourse with them regarded as shameful and stigmatizing. Really *Jewish* Jews were seen as saboteurs of what otherwise would surely have been a successful venture. They were blamed for the all-too evident, yet stubbornly denied, failure of assimilatory efforts.[27]

Established French Jewry of the late 19th century viewed with horror the influx of Eastern European Jews. Louis Dollivet, a popular Jewish novelist, made it clear that, had the newcomers only been "filtered out, no one would have treated the French Jews as foreigners," while Bernard Lazare, an ardent assimilationist, who later became a dedicated Jewish nationalist, flatly declared that he had nothing in common with "these coarse and dirty, pillaging Tartars, who come to feed upon a country

25. *Ibid.*, pp. 144, 146.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 158, 160.
27. A posthumous version of that opinion even made its way into the conclusions of Jacob Katz's otherwise profoundly perceptive study. According to him, were emancipation taking place simultanously throughout Europe, full amalgamation and the obliteration of Jewish distinctiveness could have occurred. Lack of synchronization, however, coupled with geographical mobility, was responsible for the fact that at no time and at no place assimilation could be accomplished by the Jewish population as a whole.

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which does not belong to them." Enlightened Jewish opinion made no bones about its view of the duties of *Alliance Israélite Universelle* toward the refugees: "To welcome these contemptible people to our country, to help them, to patronize them, to implant them in a soil which is not their own and which does not nourish them, in order to facilitate their conquest? For whose benefit is this? For the benefit of the cosmopolitan *juif* who has no ties with any nation, who is [like a] Beduin moving his tent about with complete indifference." Israelites, staunch French patriots, would have no truck with the rootless cosmopolitanism of a *juif*. These and similar declarations fairly expressed, if in an extreme form, the general embarassment the relatively well-adjusted Jewish community in France felt at the sight of strangers, whom dominant opinion forced upon them as their brethren. In Marrus' considered and well-documented summary, "it appears that the Eastern European Jews were neither well received nor adequately cared for. The *Paris Cometé de Bienfaisance* even attempted to have Eastern European Jews repatriated, and continually directed them out of France, mostly to America. It seems clear that the French Jewish community, not unlike Jewish communities elsewhere, was reluctant and unwilling to absorb significant numbers of Eastern European Jews. The latter were blamed by some French Jews for undoing the painfully won benefits of assimilation."[28]

Fishman has painstakingly documented the torments of assimilated British Jews, caught in what was previously described as the "Dench dilemma" — forced to admit kinship with, and accept responsibility for, the kind of people from whom they felt no less estranged than their gentile neighbors. "Already in the 1870s a marked increase in alien Jews was a source of fear and embarrassment to Anglo-Jewry. In March 1871 its mouthpiece — the *Jewish Chronicle* — perceived with obvious relief "the very pleasing fact that there is a very material decrease in the number of poor foreign Jewish immigrants, and a very material increase in the poor Jews who have left this country to seek subsistence elsewhere during the past year. . . . The Board of Guardians had adopted the Poor Law formula of restricting the possiblities of cash relief by imposing a residential qualification of six months before any applicant could be considered. . . . The unspoken assumption was that starvation was a rational deterrent. But such inhumanity would focus the alien issue still further to the detriment of the Jewish community. . ." July 29, 1881, the *Jewish Chronicle* complained — and warned: "Our fair name is bound up

28. Marrus, *The Politics of Assimilation*, *op. cit.*, pp. 160-70.

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with theirs; the outside world is not agreeable with making minute discrimination between Jews in general as much, if not more, from them than from the Anglicized portion of the Community."[29]

Fishman's analysis reveals what quite a few other studies of the problem gloss over: that the strained relation between assimilating natives and rough newcomers was as much class-related as socio-cultural. On the whole, the immigrants belonged to a different class: they added a new dimension to the hitherto uniformly middle class Jewish community. The immigrants confronted the comfortably settled and unified community with the unfamiliar problem of national solidarity, spanning positions which under different circumstances would have been sharply separated by class antagonisms. The Jewish elite was goaded and, in the end, forced by predominant opinion to declare and to practice paternalistic responsibility for people repulsive and frightening not just because of their cultural strangeness, but also because of belonging to an opposite camp in the intensifying class war. An unavoidable link between the assimilated elite and the poor, working-class immigrants would not just detract from its hard-won, impeccable Englishness, but also question its class respectability and political credentials.

The more class solidarity among immigrant workers prevailed over traditional respect for the betters among the poor members of the Jewish community, the more acute became the anxiety of the assimilated elite and its resentment of the moral and political responsibility for the unruly and disruptive fringes of the affluent society. Official Jewish institutions soon found themselves in the forefront of the struggle against Jewish socialist groups and trade unions. According to Fishman, dirty tricks and innuendos were not shunned as long as they were deemed efficient. Jewish workers, fast learning the methods applied by their more experienced English and Irish comrades, soon found that the hostility of the Jewish establishment, as overt and unqualified as that of the rest of the establishment, was if anything even more venomous: the ordinary enmity of a class threatened in its privilege mixed with the honor of the barely tolerated minority sensing a danger to its not yet fully guaranteed acceptance. With a wholly unintended comical effect, this mixture found one of its many poignant expressions in the *Jewish Chronicle*'s report of the demonstration of Jewish strikers in June 1906: "Could redound little to the credit of the East End that crowds of Jewish young men and women, conspicuously more or less recent arrivals in the country should invade

29. Fishman, *East End Jewish Radicals*, *op. cit.*, pp. 64-5, 67.

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the westwards throughfares, flaunting gaudy banners inscribed with revolutionary texts, and affrighting the decorous silence of a London Sunday with a blatant blare of brass. . ." What will the Sabbath-loving gentiles think? And what about the imposition of extra duties on the police who "count many church-goers in its rank, and the reflection that these men are compelled to forego their weekly hours of devotion for the purpose of controlling an alien mob is distinctly not a pleasant one."[30]

Emancipatory Limits of Assimilation

The inner demons of assimilation reflected the obstacles encountered and the frustration of early hopes of progressive amalgamation and dissolution of Jewish distinctiveness. But the fate of assimilation was not in the assimilants' hands. Obviously, there were some external limits to the project over which the actors themselves had little control. Yet these limits were not immediately clear and, at least for a while, could be interpreted in various ways. Naturally, the first choice was self-criticism: in view of the strength of resistance, amount of suspicion and size of the task, not enough had been done. Since the project was predicated on the unqualified acceptance of the majority's standards, the assimilants' own standards had to be examined to see how they differed. The uncivilized/foreign looking/superstitious/uneducated/poor/troublesome people forcing themselves and forced upon assimilating communities as their natural wards, offered a vivid illustration of such violation of standards. In the hope of final success, they offered a stay of execution. If only the unwanted strangers could be put out of sight, eliminated, or raised to accepted civilized standards, one could try again, starting from the point where the process had been brutally interrupted. A stay of execution did not mean, however, salvation. External barriers to assimilation as the road to emancipation were being erected so massively at both ends of the social spectrum that they could hardly be overlooked.

One area where the limits to assimilation were bound to be exposed was near the top of the social hierarchy. Lewin suggests that a particularly acute social tension is generated in a situation "in which a goal is 'almost reached'."[31] Those individuals who seemingly crossed the threshold to higher social circles did so at the cost of thoroughly effacing their former identity — everything the target group may have found offensive. By the same token, they deprived themselves of the "second line of defense,"

30. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 285.
31. Lewin, *Resolving Social Conflicts*, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

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the moral support of the group they had decided to abandon, and were increasingly vulnerable to the rejection or disapproval of the group they sought to join. Since they believed they had kept their part of the bargain — done their best to wipe out the stigma of their distinctiveness — they could only salvage their integrity by reinterpreting the values of those who legitimated the unexpected rejection. Reinterpretation can lead to the critique and ultimately rejection of previously coveted values, and ultimately to the questioning of the social order in which the now condemned values are allowed to dominate. This is not the only strategy available in the situation under discussion.[32] It is, however, as rational a strategy as any, and arguably easier to embrace than others.

Another site was close to the bottom of the social scale. Among the Jewish poor, in the tantalizingly yet deceptively open ghettos of the East, or in immigrant urban slums of St. Paul, Stepney or the Lower East Side, redemption-through-assimilation did not seem like a viable proposition. Whatever else it may have meant, assimilation was a middle-class project. It meant raising social and political acceptance to the level of an already achieved economic status. This was not a road to redemption open to the poor. In their case, a tolerable economic status was something yet to be achieved, and something likely to be achieved with the help of social, and particularly political, levers. Economic deprivation eliminated the possibility of assimilation and thus constituted a most salient limit to the project. More precisely, it invalidated the concept of amalgamation as a stage achievable merely through individual effort. Moreover, in the eyes of the poor, the idea of middle class assimilation was discredited very early on by the fact that, in their struggle for survival and improvement, they encountered middle class Jews as the most immediate obstacles to progress. This middle class Anglo-Jewry was what Morris Wishnevsky complained about in the name of fellow immigrants: "They are ashamed of us; not as one is ashamed of poor relations, but as one is shamed by a leper, an outcast, a black sheep . . . and their charity always has a flavor of riddance payment." In this context it is understandable how salvation from Jewish stigma and from pariah status could be seen as a *collective* task. And so we read in the statute of the London *Agudah Socialistim Khaverim* of 1876: "While we Jews are a part of humanity, we cannot achieve personal liberation except through that of all men."[33]

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32. One alternative is to seek readmission to the original group and retreat into the old identity. Another is to plod on against overwhelming odds and at a high psychic price, only slightly mitigated by doubtful hypotheses as to the causes of the delay.

33. Quoted in *East End Jewish Radicals*, *op. cit.*, pp. 90, 104.

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In Western slums these ideas have been embraced by those among the Jews to whom the offer extended by bourgeois liberalism did not apply. In the East there never was any liberal offer. No real or illusory avenues of escape from pariah status could tempt even the economically better off to try individual assimilation as a solution to what was clearly a collective problem — perhaps even a problem of society as a whole. "What bourgeois liberalism achieved for the Jews in Western Europe," wrote Deutscher, "only Bolshevism was able to achieve for them in Eastern Europe."[34] Or so it seemed. Thus Paul Akselrod and Yuri Zederbaum (Martov) found their way to the ranks of the same Russian revolutionary party in their search for redemption. The first, son of an impoverished craftsman from a Belorussian *shtetl*, had his imagination fired by the possibility not of "emancipation in the narrow sense of the improvement of their position, but with the goal of building the church of the future, of bringing to humanity general happiness, freedom, equality, general brotherhood, and of raising it to a new, infinitely higher level of civilization than the present one." The second, son of a rich and assimilated merchant, found in the revolution a refuge from the nightmarish memory of the 1881 Odessa pogrom — a disaster which, as he knew well, no wealth, gentile culture, or any other individual achievement could have averted. Unlike other militants, whose revolutionary identities could be explained in terms of shared class deprivation rather than national distinctiveness, this repressed yet powerful feeling that the universalistic revolutionary project was more than contingently related to his desire to solve his own particularistic ethnic problem, may have prompted Martov to fight Jewish separation in the Russian revolutionary movement with unrivaled ferocity and acerbity.[35]

To sum up, the limitations of the assimilationist project were most likely to surface either close to the end of its *individual* implementation — when the failure of the project became too obvious to be denied; or at the beginning — when it was evident that the lack of opportunities to assimilate was a function of global socio-political arrangements and part of a broader social problem. Either way, some people tended to discard the strategy of assimilation, i.e., individual adaptation to the social order, in favor of a revolutionary one. By itself, however, this shift did not necessarily entail a change of attitude towards Jewish identity.

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34. Deutscher, *Non-Jewish Jews*, *op. cit.*, p. 87.
35. Cf. Leopold H. Haimson, *The Russian Marxists and the Origins of Bolshevism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1955), pp. 28, 63-4.

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Assimilation through Revolution

It is not ethnic, cultural or religious peculiarity that divides people into ethnic categories. Rather, it is *social segregation* (prohibition of communality and commerce, ritualization of intercourse, maintenance of symbolic distinction, refusal of social esteem, etc.) which leads to the self-construction and self-perpetuation of ethnic identities. As Gellner points out, "any historical or ethnic atlas outlines several possible nationalities or nationalisms of which only a few are chosen. That some are chosen is a sociological necessity, but which ones are chosen is a matter of historic accident."[36] Ethnicity does not explain the perpetuation of differentiated patterns of intercourse. It is, rather, the social distance and mutual autonomy created and sustained by the persistence of such patterns that lead to a differentiation of cultural perspectives. These, in turn, attach various meanings to group-ascribed traits and thereby transform them into culturally significant differences subsequently reinforced through the medium of ethnocentric ideologies. In a nutshell, randomly distributed peculiarities are systematized into constitutive features of ethnic cohesion by social forces acting through group intercourse rather than stemming from ethnic distinctiveness. This, however, does not make ethnic identities any more contingent, flexible, or manipulable by individual efforts. If anything, the opposite is true. The priority of collective and supra-individual forces, i.e., forces beyond the control of those affected by their impact over individual self-definition, renders ethnic identities *objective*, i.e., immune from an individual refusal to recognize them as such.

Following Barth, the relation between ethnic identities and social intercourse can be seen as the priority of ethnic boundaries over ethnic content. The continuity of ethnic groups depends on the maintenance of boundaries which precede the systematization of cultural traits as ethnic distinctions. Moreover, ethnic traits themselves may change in the course of time, and traits considered central to a given ethnic formation may disappear altogether. As long as boundaries are maintained (and, to reiterate, they are maintained by segregatory practices), the disappearance of such traits will hardly change the reality of ethnic classification. In all likelihood, the focus of discriminatory definition will simply shift to other real or imaginary traits previously considered insignificant and "culturally unthematized." On the whole, "ethnic categories provide an organizational vessel that may be given varying contents and forms of

36. Ernest Gellner, "Ethnicity, Culture, Class and Power," in *Ethnic Diversity and Conflict in Eastern Europe*, Peter F. Singer, ed. (Santa Barbara: ABC Clio, 1980), p. 260.

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content in varying socio-cultural systems. They may be of great relevance to behavior, but they need not be; they may pervade all social life, or they may be relevant only in limited sectors of activity . . . [it is] the ethnic *boundary* that defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses." However, once the boundary has been established and is successfully maintained, "ethnic identity implies a series of constraints on the kinds of roles an individual is allowed to play, and the partners he may choose for different kinds of transactions." Among ethnic groups, *pariah groups* constitute a special case. These are groups forcibly reduced to a low status, denied social deference and, on the whole, confined to occupations which, however indispensable within the global division of labor, are shunned and abhorred by the dominant majority. This "pariah status" can be seen as a product of permanent and irreperable asymmetry in group intercourse: the result of a situation in which interaction is completely in the hands of the dominant group which alone sets the rules and the limits of interaction, while the oppressed group is reduced to adaptation to the given situation. In the case of the pariah group, boundaries are externally imposed, and they are in principle powerful enough to invalidate in advance the group's attempts to unilaterally improve its status. "The boundaries of pariah groups are most strongly maintained by the excluding host population, and they are often forced to make use of easily noticeable diacritica to advertise their identity. . . . Where the pariahs attempt to pass into larger society, the culture of the host population is generally well known; thus the problem is reduced to a question of escaping the stigmata of disability by dissociating with the pariah community and faking another origin."[37]

What seems to follow from Barth's perceptive synthesis of anthropological wisdom is that the pariah status 1) contains a constant invitation to attempt an escape; 2) defines redemption, or improvement in general, as the acquisition of the way of life practiced by the host society (as it institutionalizes the assumption of the superiority of host values); and 3) presents the difference of cultural patterns as the *cause* of discrimination and oppression. In other words, the pariah status both engenders a temptation to escape and directs attempts to do so on the wrong tracks, where they are bound to fail. Since it is the boundary rather than what it contains that differentiates the relative status of groups locked in permanent interaction, obliterated cultural signs of separatedness and differentiation will be soon replaced by others. The boundary is

37. Frederick Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Difference* (Bergen: Universitets Forlaget, 1969), pp. 14, 17, 31.

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likely to withstand considerable readjustment. The ostensibly cultural (rather than socio-political) determination of inferiority is a deception, which more effectively than any other device defuses the dangers of a successful attack against the existing pattern of domination and its practical consequences. It extinguishes the fire it has kindled; but in the process the fuel is all but burnt out.

The admission of someone else's status and way of life as superior, commendable and more attractive is a constant source of restlesness — at least for those within the pariah groups who find the limits of success inside the boundaries too constraining. These individuals are most likely to appear on the border between the pariah and the host communities. They will come from among those members of the pariah group who, on the strength of their occupational functions, interact most intensely with the host society, particularly with its elite circles — the carriers of the coveted values and the vivid illustrations of the distinction explained by the possession of such values. For these individuals, the allurement of cultural traits recognized as superior and displayed as the legitimation of social superiority is a problem they cannot ignore. They must somehow deal with the problem. The ways to deal with it differ in their individual and collective consequences, though admittedly not in the degree of their rationality or the probability of their choice.

It is common in socio-psychological literature to dichotomize possible reactions to ethnically defined social inferiority into an all-out attack against the principle of discrimination. This is done in the name of dissociating ethnic ascription from the determination of social placement, or with the "black is beautiful" type of reaction, when the struggle is aimed at the renegotiation of the dominant evaluation of the group heretofore constructed as inferior. Barth offers a more elaborate inventory of possible strategies: "In their pursuit of participation in wider social systems to obtain new forms of value they can choose between the following basic strategies: 1) they may attempt to pass and become incorporated . . . ; 2) they may accept a 'minority' status, accomodate to and seek to reduce their minority diabilities by encapsulating all cultural differentiae in sectors of non-articulation, while participating in the larger system . . . in the other sectors of activity; 3) they may choose to emphasize their ethnic identity, using it to develop new positions and patterns to organize activities in those sectors previously not found in their society or inadequately developed for new purposes."[38]

38. *Ibid.*, p. 33.

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The first strategy makes sense to those who follow it only in so far as they assume that the disability of the group as a whole is not negotiable and hence not rectifiable, while the factors which keep any given individual inside the disabled group are essentially manipulable and can be mobilized to the opposite effect (e.g., the factors are of the nature of culturally induced traits, which can be discarded and replaced in the process of *Veredelung der Israeliten*). In the West, this was the strategy followed by some members of the Jewish elite at early stages of political emancipation, when the wholesale advancement of the community was not seen as a foregone conclusion, and later when the continuous influx of unrefined elements from lands not yet reached by the benign *Veredelung* influence made the advancement of the community look like a Sisyphean task. In the East, the first strategy was the main vehicle of self-improvement. In the absence of political emancipation and in the face of the discouraging weakness of liberal opinion, the collective redemption was never really put on the agenda, and the solitary passage seemed the only realistic hope.

For obvious reasons, the second strategy was never tried in the East on a large scale (even if contemplated and even written into platforms of mostly ephemeral cultural movements). But it seems to have replaced the first strategy for Jewry in most Western, liberal countries once two important changes in the Jewish situation had taken place. First was the growing class uniformity of the Jewish population, with all or most Jews moving solidly into the middle or upper reaches of the bourgeoisie and hence fighting off the threat of social disabilities with middle class resources and techniques. With this departure, individual passage tied to the effacement of past identity (always a risky, tiresome, and psychically costly affair) lost most of its previously imputed advantages. Second was the new and unexpected obstacle to the erasure of Jewish commitments: the creation of the State of Israel, and particularly the entry of Israel on a political and military path, which rendered loyalty to Israel once more particularistic, i.e., difficult to reconcile with loyalty to liberal and other general humanistic standards in terms of which the full acceptance of Jews as "unmarked" members of the host community was sought and argued. The impact of the latter factor has been truly remarkable. On the one hand, there is a growing tendency among diasporic Jewry to identify with the most particularistic and fundamentalist, least liberal and universalistic political camps within the host society: it is in such camps that Jews may expect their unqualified acceptance of the strong-arm policy of Israel to be shared or at least received sympathetically. On the other hand, even the commitment to blatantly universalistic values tends to

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be institutionalized and displayed in a particularistic Jewish framework (hence the surprising revival of *Jewish* socialism, a *Jewish* anti-nuclear movement, or *Jewish* groups formed to fight discrimination against homosexuals). Under the circumstances, the complete elimination of Jewish distinctiveness, even if attractive for other reasons, is hardly a viable proposition. Hence the perfect fit between the situation and the second strategy, now probably the most commonly accepted within Western Jewry — a post-humorous triumph of Mendelsohn's recipe to be a Jew at home, a man in the street.[39] The battle to prevent the synagogue from interfering with the "elsewhere" having been won, the task is to keep this "elsewhere" from interfering with the synagogue, and to gain the recognition that all potentially offensive and divisive topics belong within the synagogue.

The third of Barth's strategies, in its pure form, seems to have played a minor role in the history of Jewish emancipation. Not so, however, if one considers as its modified and somewhat diluted version the notorious Jewish propensity to seek skills in relatively new, expanding, occupations. These new areas in the social division of labor promised access to the desired social standing in comparison with better established prestigious occupations, which explains the overrepresentation of Jews in all truly modern occupations that entail the equally modern mechanisms of apprenticeship, skill acquisition and career structure. Barth's useful typology, though, is missing a fourth strategy, that of a frontal assault on the very principle of discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity, aimed at the delegitimation of the practices of segregation and differential treatment. Though the practices in question are easiest to focus on, and seemingly most realistically rectifiable when they rest on politically sustained legal principles, there is always a likelihood that legislative levers and political force can be used to promote the erosion of these forms of discrimination caused and sustained by diffuse practices of social interaction or casual cultural attitudes. As Dench has wittily commented, "[I]f Jews who have suffered for so long, are able to believe that tinkering with social institutions can alter the hearts of men, then it is churlish, not to mention inopportune, to dispute it too hotly."[40] Such a belief had been, after all, authorized and anointed by the never challenged modern canon that

39. An updated and more realistic version of this can be found in Rabbi Isaac M. Wise's claim: "For our part we are Israelites in the synagogue, and Americans elsewhere." Quoted in A. L. Epstein, *Ethnics and Identity: Three Studies in Ethnicity* (London: Tavistock, 1978), p. 64.

40. Dench, *Minorities in the Open Society*, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

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sanctified the faith in the pliability and perfectibility of man as the iron-clad warranty of the soundness of its ambitions and that upheld the right of properly instituted powers to define and enforce the pattern of individual life and social intercourse. This belief may be seen as the common denominator of the Jewish "special relation" with the modern socialist movement. Beyond this common feature, however, hides a sharp difference of psycho-social factors that aroused Jewish interest in socialist programs and in socialism as a milieu. The most profound difference was related to the previously discussed opposition between problems arising respectively at the beginning and end of the assimilation drive.

Jewish Roads to Revolution

Imperial and Weimar Germany offer the most thoroughly investigated cases of the first type of Jewish involvement in socialism. By the end of the 19th century, it had become evident that the advancement of Jews inside the existing German polity had its limitations. Individual economic and educational excellence did not by themselves guarantee political equality, social acceptance, and freedom from prejudice and discrimination. Weak and submissive German liberalism stopped short of breaking the political monopoly of conservative and nationalist land-owning elites. According to Wistrich's calculation, after 1893 non-baptized Jews virtually disappeared from the *Reichstag* benches of German bourgeois and conservative parties. However, they entered *en masse* the parliamentary representation of the rising socialist movement where, beginning in 1881, they regularly made up more than 10% of the group (a proportion 10 times higher than in the population as a whole).[41] Inside the SDP, Jews constituted a very special category. Unlike non-Jewish rank and file members and the leadership, they came mostly from well-off middle class families. Above all, they were generally highly educated (in the 1912 parliament, for instance, 11 out of 12 Jewish socialist deputies, as compared to 12 out of 98 non-Jewish deputies, were university graduates). Without any conscious design and without any noticeable outside pressures, the Jewish socialist activists found themselves heavily concentrated in selected areas of the party. They constituted a majority among party journalists, theorists, and teachers. This assured them central and highly prestigious roles in the party and, thus, in German politics as a whole.

The same roles, however, eventually made their position inside the party increasingly awkward and uncomfortable, once the originally radical

41. Cf. Robert S. Wistrich, *Socialism and the Jews: The Dilemmas of Assimilation in Germany and Austro-Hungary* (London: Association of University Presses, 1982), pp. 80-81.

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movement ossified into a highly bureaucratized establishment concerned primarily with routines and upward social mobility. When integration and preservation rather than ideological mobilization became central, the theoretical schisms and hair-splitting in which the Jewish party elite excelled came to be resented by the increasingly pragmatic leadership. Following the well-established German pattern, the effort to phase out the now bothersome ideological principles took the form of an attack against the *Ostjuden*. New party leaders of the Noske generation, administrators trained mostly from within the trade-unions, felt threatened and uncomfortable when forced by sophisticated intellectuals to debate issues irrelevant to their concrete tasks. They saw party intellectuals as outsiders to matters rightfully belonging to German workers. The radical ideologists were best dismissed when called dirty Polish Jews, and explained away by reference to their incurably East European mentality and inability to understand the German working class.

There was, however, another Jewish road to socialism and revolution. It did not start when assimilation failed, but well before. This second road was an *alternative to assimilation*. It was the choice of the Jewish poor, who had every reason to consider their plight the result of class as well as national oppression. The exploiters, whom they knew directly and who caused them the most suffering, were all Jews. They inscribed their grievances and their hopes alike within the framework of the Jewish community — the latter day descendants of the early modern ghettos.

Throughout European history, Jews lived in closely knit communities within compact quarters of the towns. Complex rituals further emphasized the isolation and effectively guaranteed the self-imposed boundary. From the 15th century, the Jewish habit was codified as the law imposed by the host authorities. What has now become the Jewish ghetto was not, however, experienced by its inhabitants unambiguously as a prison. It was indeed a place of enforced confinement, but also an island of relative security and mutual support in a sea of uncertainty and hostility. The ghetto was never an autarkic society and could exist only in a symbiotic relation with the gentile world. This took many of the ghetto residents outside the walls and brought them into regular contact with the non-Jewish environment. As a rule, however, at the end of the day or the week spent outside, they returned inside the walls with a feeling of relief — as to their natural and only home. For the Jews' spiritual life, the ghetto was a self-sufficient community.

As Katz has pointed out, Jewish self-enclosure in the ghetto had another effect of far reaching significance directly relevant to the present discussion. "The logical corollary of the socially introverted Jewish ghetto

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life was the Jewish indifference to conditions and events in the outside world. The tense Jewish feeling and apprehension regarding Christianity, which were the principle characteristics of the Middle Ages, had disappeared during the ghetto period. . . [T]ension — even aggression — gradually weakened, and was replaced by indifference and apathy."[42] The Jews, including their spiritual leaders, turned their backs to the surrounding culture which, for all practical purposes, was declared out of bounds and of no Jewish concern. Formerly pugnacious stances toward Christian teachings and institutions — a response to the Church's real or merely surmised proselytizing ambitions — generated an acute interest in Christian ideas and Christian life, and led followers of the Judaic tradition to follow them attentively. Later, with Jewish distinctiveness officially recognized and institutionalized, this interest waned along with the feeling of urgency. Enclosed in the ghetto, Jewish life acquired its own momentum, and its subsequent history developed by and large independently of events outside the walls. The spiritual reflection of this autonomy was the tendency to inscribe all problems facing Jewish life into the framework of internal Jewish resources, and to seek their solutions through means accessible to Jews and controlled by them. To most ghetto inhabitants, barred from all contact with the outside world and in most cases prevented from such contact by linguistic barriers, the thought that changes in the Christian world could resolve Jewish worries must have seemed bizarre and outlandish.

Winds of change, blowing from gentile quarters and causing ghetto walls to crumble, did not reach the low and downtrodden layers of the ghetto community without first passing through its affluent and educated strata. From the point of view of pious Yiddish-speaking craftsmen and petty traders, the immediate effect was extremely disconcerting. Traditional community leaders were the first to catch the stigmatizing aspects of their Jewishness. For all their poorer brethren knew and cared, they turned into part of the alien and irrelevant gentile world. Remembering his childhood spent in the Jewish quarters of turn-of-the-century Warsaw, Bernard Singer wrote of poor apprentices from the basements and attics of Jewish streets, of mercilessly exploited shop-assistants living a life of misery and hopeless drudgery, in whose view "'Goyiim' sat as their representatives in the Jewish Council on Grzybowska Street. Members of the council differed from the Jewish mass in their dress, language, comportment. . . . With their heads uncovered, sporting thick

42. Jacob Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance: Studies in Jewish-Gentile Relations in Medieval and Modern Times* (Cambridge: Oxford University Press, 1961), pp. 133-34.

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gentry-style moustaches, they looked like rich Christians. Many a client gnashed his teeth looking at his wardens."[43] The dormant but always present resentment of the Jewish rich mingled now with the centuries-old indignation aimed at non-Jewish strangers — leading, so to speak, to a genuine "overdetermination" of the class war inside the ghetto. When the winds of change finally reached the innermost segments of the ghetto community, it ruffled simultaneously national pride and class hostility. From the bottom of the ghetto hierarchy, emancipation looked like a compound of national vindication and class liberation.

The product was *Jewish* radicalism, *Jewish* socialism and a *Jewish* revolutionary movement distinct from Jewish participation in the radical socialist organizations of their host societies. The latter were mostly for intellectuals of Jewish origin who, having taken advantage of educational opportunities, were bound to find out — sooner in the East than in the West, but always to their dismay — that the existing polity was ill-prepared to meet the expectations aroused with the acquisition of skills and successful acculturation. More often than not, the rebellion of Jewish intellectuals was an integral part of the wider conflict inspired by the mutual maladjustment of intellectual ambitions and a relatively backward and slow-developing society. Illiberal restrictions aimed specifically at Jews, however, added to the bitterness of the conflict and rendered the incubation of a subversive mood more likely.[44] For the Jewish part of the disaffected and radicalized intellectuals, universal causes of protest were supplemented by the assimilation drive. Joining the universal movement which knew no Jew or gentile was the only way in which the handicap of Jewishness could be shed. Emancipation did not just loom at the end of the long and tortuous revolutionary struggle; it had been accomplished by the very act of joining. Once inside the socialist movement, Jews immediately turned into "men as such."

In a sense, *Jewish* socialism was an exact reversal of the above. Here, socialism was not a means of emancipation from Jewishness or an alternative version of assimilation, whose other variety failed or turned out to be impracticable. On the contrary, it was bent on redeeming the Jewish tradition by liberating it from the domination of class enemies. Jewish

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43. Bernard Singer, *Moje Nalewki* (Warszawa: Czytelnik, 1959), pp. 9-10.

44. According to Brym, in the Russian Empire in 1875 Jewish participation in the revolutionary movement was lower in proportion than the number of Jews in the country on the whole. By 1905, however, with the numbers of educated Jews growing fast, Jews (who counted for less than 4% of the total population) constituted 37% of all revolutionaries arrested during the year. Cf. Robert Brym, *The Jewish Intelligentsia and Russian Marxism* (London: Macmillan, 1978), pp. 53-54.

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socialists did not perceive any contradiction between their Jewishness, which they had no wish to renounce or hide, and the human emancipation they sought. The opposite was the case. Many Jewish-thinking and Yiddish-speaking socialists saw in socialist society the fullest implementation of the same redemptive, Messianic drive of Judaism that had been swept under the carpet by the joint efforts of official orthodoxy and the rapidly "gentilizing" capitalist elite. It was in the name of the Jewish redemptive tradition that power was to be wrenched from the doubly treacherous hands (in *both* class *and* national senses) of the Jewish bosses, aided and abetted by retrograde interpreters of Judaism.

Most studies of the Jewish role in modern socialism have focused on the most spectacular German and Austrian cases and have established that Jews were attracted to socialism mostly as a program of *assimilation by other means*. There was a socialist as well as a liberal-bourgeois way to assimilate. In light of this overtly or tacitly accepted assumption, Zionism stood as the only alternative to assimilationist policy — an alternative to *both* socialism and the project of individual acculturation. It stood as the only modern and secular form of reaffirmation of Jewish identity or the only program of perpetuating Jewishness under modern conditions. However, while it is true that bourgeois-liberal assimilationism and all Jewish socialism (in its German, Russian, East End or American forms alike) did not include the intention to reject symbiosis with the respective gentile host societies or the ambition of a territorial separation from the gentile world, there was a dividing line cutting across this supposedly homogenous camp — a line more relevant than the politically enforced distinction between the Zionist and locally oriented programs.

Sorin's recent study of the socialist movement among turn-of-the-century Jewish immigrants to America casts doubt on the received wisdom, which identified commitment to socialism with opposition to Judaism and considered socialism a likely choice of already marginalized and estranged individuals. As Sorin's subjects were recent newcomers from Eastern Europe who followed patterns of action brought from their original home, his conclusions have a direct bearing on the relation between Jews and socialism in countries where they were most numerous.

According to Sorin, Jews did not *join* the socialist movement in America; they *were* the socialist movement in America (together with recent German immigrants). If, by the turn of the century, Jews and Germans were the twin pillars of American socialism, after 1908: "The Jews in New York City alone would constitute the largest, most powerful single element in New York State socialism. And New York State socialism was the largest single element in the national party." By the end of WWI, the

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Yiddish-language socialist daily, with a circulation of 200,000, was by far the most widely-read and influential socialist newspaper in the US.

Jewish socialists were anything but the homeless, unattached, estranged individuals that traditional opinion projects. There was a dense network of Jewish communal institutions on the new continent, an abundant and thriving Jewish life, and socialists were deeply immersed in both. In no way did they feel uncomfortable in the Jewish tradition. The opposite was closer to the truth: most Jewish socialists perceived their commitments as the only natural fulfillment of their Jewish identity. Indeed, "without Jewish religious values, proletarianization and exploitation by themselves will not explain Jewish socialism. The evidence strongly suggests that the Jewish socialists were a prophetic minority, responding to biblical norms of social justice, interpreted in a modern context. They were people deeply immersed in the moral commandments of the *Torah* and of the *Talmud*, in messianic belief-systems, traditions of *tsedaka*, . . . mutual aid and communal responsibility."[45] Jewish socialism drew its strength from its members' communal ties rather than from their opposition to, and estrangement from, communal values. The communal institutions, rich, viable, and with immense mobilizing potential, served often as a springboard for socialist action.

There was an unbroken continuity between the poor's growing rebellion against rising exploitation inside the Jewish community, and the Jewish poor's interest in socialism, which offered a class-oriented interpretation of their misery complete with a clear prescription. In a sense, the socialism of the Jewish poor was a struggle to redefine (not abandon) the Jewish tradition in terms better attuned to the position of the Jewish masses within an increasingly capitalist environment. This is how the first Jewish socialist, Aaron Lieberman, who learned about socialism in Lithuania and later brought it to the Jewish poor of London and New York, defined his credo in 1875: "Socialism is not alien to us. The Community is our existence, the revolution — our tradition, the commune — the basis of our legislation as quite clearly indicated by the ordinances forbidding the sale of land, by those on the Jubilee and sabbatical years, on equal rights, fraternity, etc. Our ancient Jewish social order — anarchy; the real link between us across the surface of the globe — internationalism. In the spirit of our people, the great prophets of our time, such as Marx and Lassalle, were educated and developed . . ."[46]

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45. Gerald Sorin, *The Prophetic Minority: American Jewish Radicals 1880-1920* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), pp. 2-3.

46. Quoted in Jonathan Frenkel, *Prophecies and Politics: Socialism, Nationalism and the*

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Abraham Rosenberg, the president of ILGWU, could not find a better way to express his feeling at the sight of the great walk-out of the New York cloakmakers in 1910 than to recall the scene which "must have taken place when the Jews were led out of Egypt."[47] Sorkin estimates that over half of American Jewish socialists "were consistently, unambiguously, and often assertively identifying as Jews. An additional 16% were imbued with a 'dual orientation' — with some degree of Jewish consciousness peacefully coexisting with the belief that Jews will gradually acculturate."[48] Even when the logic of the socialist project to which they dedicated their lives led them to renounce all particularism and parochialism, including their national varieties, and assert instead the universality of the human species, they tended to construct their new "general-human" identities by using thoroughly Jewish symbols: displaying the non-observance of divisive rules as prescribed by Jewish (mostly religious) authorities. Even in this negative way, their socialism was given shape and expression by the community in which they grew and with which — if only by opposition — they identified.

What the critics of Jewish parochial communality did not bargain for was the slow demise of Jewish socialism, which followed closely the weakening of communal bonds. Wherever Jewish community disintegrated under the atomizing impact of bourgeois liberalism, Jewish socialism ran out of steam. The Jewish masses then emerged from poverty through individual enrichment or following the careers typical of the educated class, and Jewish communal life tended to be reduced to the "accepted rituals," i.e., "the ones which most closely approximate the religious practices found in gentile homes."[49] In all affluent Western countries today, Jews belong almost uniformly to the middle class, with most hurdles to individual advancement according to the generally dominant social standards removed or at least considerably lowered. Thus emancipation has lost its urgency and appeal, as have its assimilatory and socialist expressions. With the borders stripped of their former role as trade barriers, struggle for exit visas and queueing for entry tickets have lost much of their romanticism and attraction.

Russian Jews 1862-1900 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 33. See also Sorin, *The Prophetic Minority*, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

47. Quoted in Sorin, *The Prophetic Minority*, *op.cit.*, p. 82.

48. *Ibid.*, p. 119.

49. This is what J. R. Kramer and S. Leventman found in the "gilded ghetto" of the "North City" they investigated three decades ago. See *Children of the Gilded Ghetto* (New Haven: YaIe University Press, 1961). See also Epstein, *Ethnics and Identity*, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

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Popular Music and Adorno's "The Aging of the New Music"

Robert Hullot-Kentor

> We may smile at the bombastic way in which Adorno categorically condemns the music situation today.[1]

Popular Music

It would be more true to say that people *must* smile at Adorno's bombast.[2] Whenever Adorno's name comes up in the discussion of music, people cannot stop smiling: "He didn't like jazz did he?" The smile asserts itself by acquiescing; it is itself popular: dressed up as an individual, it is in fact stereotypical. Laughing about Adorno and jazz, people finally seem to be themselves. Aside from the platitude that Adorno was an intransigent critic of popular music and an equally narrow acolyte of the Schoenberg line (neither of which is true) hardly anything is known in America of Adorno's philosophy of music, though there is an enormous amount to know about. Just the bulk of the writings is staggering: more than four thousand pages of his *Gesammelte*

1. David A. Sheldon, "The Philosophy of T. W. Adorno," *Current Musicology* (Spring 1965), p. 90.

2. The first part of this essay derives from Adorno's "On Popular Music," in *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, no. 9 (1941), pp. 17- 48; "Über den Fetishcharakter in der Musik und die Regression des Hörers," *Gesammelte Schriften* [*G.S.*] 14, (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1973), pp. 14-50; *Currents of Music* (unpublished, unpaginated manuscript that will appear in Adorno's *G.S.* in the next few years); and Eisler (and Adorno), *Composing for the Films* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947).

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Schriften [*Collected Writings*] are exclusively on music; these include books on Mahler, Berg, Wagner, one on film music, an introductory guide to listening to new music, innumerable essays including works on Bach, Krenek, Zemlinsky, Ravel, Bartok, Strauss, Stravinsky, and essays on musical pedagogy. That begins to scan the writings on music in the twenty volumes of the *Gesammelte Schriften* published to date. The forty volumes that will eventually complete Adorno's writings, diaries, poetry and lectures will contain another group of musicological writings including two fragmentary works: a major work on Beethoven and another on the reproduction of music, in addition to a volume of musicological writings in English that will bring together an extended study of music in radio (*Currents of Music*) with essays on popular music. His correspondence with several major composers is being published outside of the collected writings; an important volume with Ernst Krenek has already appeared and another with Alban Berg is being edited. Then there are the three volumes of Adorno's own compositions — including a *Singspiel* based on a text by Mark Twain — and his recordings of Schoenberg's piano music. Truly bombastic, though not without truth, Gunter Anders has called Adorno the first person to have anything new to say about music since Pythagoras. Whether any of this is needed this side of the Atlantic is questionable: only his *Sociology of Music*, *In Search of Wagner*, and *The Philosophy of New Music* are available here and the last is — in spite of the effort put into it and many excellent passages — so faulty that it can hardly be studied without one being irretrievably misled. So, Adorno's musicology is not known here and, on this monoglot landscape, currently cannot be known.

Music Today: Popular and Classical

Meanwhile, the situation of music is disastrous. Up until the turn of this century almost all musical performances were performances of new music.[3] Beethoven, never dreaming of the *rigor mortis* that would set in, bragged that his music would be heard even a decade after his death. When his music was revived, people knew enough about it to actually revile it. Similarly, the vehemence with which performances of Schoenberg, Berg, and Stravinsky were criticized in the first part of this century was a measure of the music's social actuality; the concert halls were packed, however furious. New music was expected. Today it is

3. Karl-Heinz Stockhausen, "To the International Music Council" *Perspectives of New Music*, vol. 25 (1987), pp. 39-40.

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hermetically excluded; whether it is good or bad, hardly anyone could possibly know. To find out what is going on — and what has been going on since somewhere around 1910 — requires a specialist. "Popular" music fills all possible listening space, and increasingly on an international scale. Ever since the 50s one could get out of a car and hear in the kitchen the music one had just been listening to;[4] today, one gets out of a plane and hears the same music dribbling out of speakers in Portugal, Oregon, and Japan.

It would be senseless to gesture toward that other world of "classical" music as preserving a niche for new music. The polarization of "popular" and "classical" music was an act of consolidation: the category of "classical" music was itself an invention of popular music.[5] This was something more than subordination by right of naming: in so far as "classical" music is a canon of works literally being played to death, the principle of its performance is "popular," that is, repetition; and it is popular in the form in which it is listened to in that distraction is the rule: hardly anyone is listening, as the automatic hootings and bravos in the concert hall make plain. While the concert performance of classical music is an exceptional event, in its daily existence, like that of popular music, it is primarily background to other events. The only cachet it has to wear is that bestowed by popularity, the belly, the "what I like." A recent *New York Times* review of new recordings of the Second Viennese School is ready to turn the world on its head to defend new music, castigating those early 20th century composers "who conserved the Romantic tradition rather than overthrew it." All this must be done away with, obviously, and so the reviewer is tough on "our relentlessly conservative, increasingly older concert audience." The pith of the reviewer's radicalism, however, is gourmandise: the audience — he complains — "ventures into the 20th century only to savor Sibelius, Rachmaninoff and Mahler."[6] These are shy nibblers; radicals would eat from a century-wide tray, big scoops of Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern. Between popular and classical, new music occupies a no-man's land and over the last number of years this has become increasingly precarious. As Stockhausen notes: "In the last decade new music has lost most of its previous support for commissions, studio

4. In *Currents of Music*, *op. cit.*, Adorno discusses this event as an element of the spatialization of music.

5. *Ibid.*

6. Robert Schwartz, "Giving 20th-Century Masters Their Due," *New York Times* (August 7, 1988), p. 23.

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budgets, recordings, and performances. The most important record companies have cancelled their long-time contracts with composers and performers of new music. Important studios for electronic and experimental music have no more staff or equipment. Radio programs have steadily reduced programs of new music, as has television."[7]

Amusement and the New Left

Putting the three disks of Webern's incredibly condensed life work on the record player and the feet up on an ottoman may result in disappointment, if not fury at the music as chaotic, nonsensical and irritating. The claim that it is impossible to listen to new music is made too often to doubt. But what needs explanation is why hardly anyone suspects that his or her ability to hear is inadequate. Even in regard to popular music, evidence of inadequate listening is right on the surface: it would not be necessary to play it so loudly if it could actually be heard.[8] The source for doubting one's ability to hear adequately was once contained in the concept of culture. While this concept still extends, for example, to the perception that a book written in a foreign language is not valueless even though it may be immediately incomprehensible, this concept no longer extends to music. New music, which evidently sounds like a foreign language, is unhesitatingly rebuffed on just this basis. Interestingly, while everyone has a strong sense of the difference between coherence and incoherence in music, any challenge to this boundary line — such as occurs when it is pointed out that to a critically trained ear much popular music sounds as incoherent as new music does to the untrained — is usually met by the response that it is all a matter of opinion anyhow. The ordering of musical sounds is of course no less difficult a consideration, and no more a matter of opinion, than what can follow in a sentence and make sense, as any piano novice discovers the first time that the fingers meet the keyboard. The certainty, however, that composition is solely a matter of opinion has the same origin as the certainty that one's listening is unimpeachable: the assumption that all art is a source of immediate pleasure and as such serves the self; its prerogative makes the idea of "adequate listening" an oxymoron: music must come to the listener, be "just for you" as every popular song promises. This assumption is as socially structured, as the distinction between public and private life

7. Stockhausen, *op. cit.*, p. 39. For the sake of clarity, I have corrected Stockhausen's imperfect English at a couple of points.

8. Cf. Adorno, *Currents of Music*, *op. cit.*

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from which it derives. Lukács once sketched this boundary as that between the *citoyen* with equal political rights and the *bourgeois* with unequal economic prerogatives, cultivating his or her pleasures. The reviewer for the *New York Times* wants to defend new music, which cuts across this division, by the principle that defines the exclusion of new music in the first place. At the same time that the "just for you" assures a belligerent style of listening, it blocks the concentration that new music requires; such effort threatens to allow the world of mediation to disorganize the scene of the carefully positioned armchair. The ideology of amusement dovetails with the interests of record manufacturers, who would be very sorry if people began to perceive — as Marcuse pointed out long ago — that listening to popular music is largely a function of the record industry. If they gave it a thought, people would begin to remember just how much unwilling effort was required to put up with the music they have come to adore.

Obviously, more than willingness to listen and concentration are needed to be able to hear adequately. The differentiation between sense and nonsense, crucial to the rejection of new music, is not to be suspended in order to let in new sounds; rather, this differentiation is to be intensified. Here, the universities have done little to help; courses in new music are the exception. Even if the decision were made to offer more courses, there is hardly anyone able or interested in giving the courses. Outside of music departments, faculties are likely to have about the same level of musical comprehension as the students. And though faculties carp endlessly about the students' nescience, they often share identical musical alliances and — having more regrets to keep stored away, a nerve directly tapped by new music — they may be even more antagonistic to "that stuff" than the students themselves. Finding ways to appreciate what they have no choice but to listen to anyway, those in the humanities interested in music and who have a vestigial relation to the New Left are more likely to want to demonstrate the "critical content" of rock and punk than to study or teach music that is truly shattering. Without giving it a thought, they reject new music as elitist in favor of the reputed democratic accessibility of popular music, though the reverse is actually the case. Popular music is an authoritarian structure in which every note is subordinated to tonal and rhythmical stereotypes that take the place of the listening ear; the semblance of social spontaneity that results is strictly managed. The simulated "togetherness" is not to be taken at face value any more than the self-advertised fraternity of the "business community." The

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call sedimented in repetitively rhythmical music is one to obedience; the desire to serve is unassuagable in the powerless.[9]

The New Left was never suspicious of the spontaneity claimed by popular music, and as a result failed to develop any relation to modern music. Musically there was no counter-culture: the left's negative estimation of abstraction and dissonance, its desire to clap along, its gullibility for the charade of "folk" music (today's reggae) and for socially "progressive" lyrics — which are usually a stock of rationalizations for anything but social progress — all this had deeper affinities with the censors of "degenerate art" than with the whole generation of artists, Schoenberg, Kandinsky, Moholy-Nagy and Toller included, who fled them. The New Left was sports-minded, preferably know-nothing, eager to get to the movies, threatened by expression: at one small college event that characterized the New Left as a whole, the opening soprano bars of "Pierrot Lunaire" had a whole audience of politically engaged students and faculty giggling.

Social Function and the New

Today, as twenty years ago, whatever the political alliances involved, a word against popular music sets everyone on edge. This is because of the urgency of the functions it must fulfill and because it cannot actually fulfill them. Popular music must libidinize dead space; it must manufacture a busyness and direction to time that is in fact stagnant or dully swirling; it must take up the slack of endless, empty — usually wordless — waiting, at home, in stores, on highways and now on telephone lines; in innumerable situations its role is to make time pass by veiling the fact that people have nothing to say to each other or that they are being coerced. It is strictly ideological: socially necessary semblance. At parties its rhythmical and harmonic stereotypes manage time by providing a schema for a blunt sequence of movements that muffle the pressure of looming social disintegration, producing grateful devotion to the music. Because pleasure is out of the question, popular music offers fun: repetition aims at the mastery of time by its rigid exclusion. This form of the effort to master time is the point of convergence between fun and labor and explains the laboring quality of the rhythms of popular music. In contrast to the music of the Sirens, which promised an end to labor, popular music compliments labor because its rhythm is labor's ideal. The arbitrary forward pressure of popular music, predictably taking up after a few dragging measures

9. Cf. Adorno, "On Popular Music," *op. cit.*, pp. 35ff.

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with a break that says: "here we go, now it lets loose," promises a transformation that is belied by the fade out; music that never went anywhere cannot end. On occasion, the songs are so badly constructed (e.g. the Beatles' "Hey Jude") that they are trapped in a harmonic pattern that they are unable to resolve, and are therefore compelled to repeat their last lines endlessly. The disc jockey has the job of transforming the incapacity of the compositions into a tease by the formulaic enjambment of the last few bars of the song into whatever follows; if the music were heard to the last note, it would frequently show up the incoherence of everything that preceeded it. Whereas the fade out transforms time into space, music must volatilize time. Whether this occurs depends on the actuality of memory: the expression of the musical material, the new.[10] This cannot, however, occur in popular music because its function is to mask an anxiety that the self fears will dissolve it if the self tried to follow it through. Popular music must deflect memory and expression. This poses one of its central formal concerns: the deflection must present itself as the immediate manifestation of subjectivity, popular music's primary ideological posture. Popular music has one solution to this problem, and this solution is apparently inexhaustible: subjectivity is excluded through its dogged simulation by the use of cliches at every level, not only harmonically and rhythmically, but most obviously in the lyrics, from down home wisdom, to weary reflexion, to my girl, etc., etc. Wherever language has hardened from the exclusion of subjectivity, it becomes material for popular music; each song needs to quote no more than one cliche to feign a subjectivity that is no longer subjective. This is true even when the appearances are flamboyant: punk wounds are decoration and the punk scream is the imitation of a scream, not the scream itself; it is a diluted nineteenth-century aesthetic.

Nothing guarantees that, where popular music fails to volatilize time, new music will succeed. That it is not even heard reduces its potential close to zero. But its exclusion carries greater implications than how many people will hear it. The separation of popular and new music results in the latter succumbing to the same limitations as the former. This is the implication of the history of new music that Adorno presents in the "Aging of the New Music." Following out this history and the convergence of serious and popular music will point up what is central to all of Adorno's work.

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10. See Adorno, "Über Einige Relationen zwischen Musik und Malerei," in *Anmerkungen zur Zeit* (Akademie der Künste, Berlin, 1967), especially pp. 5-9 and "Vers une musique informelle," *G. S.* 16, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1978), pp. 493-540.

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"The Aging of the New Music"

Against New Music

Adorno's "The Aging of the New Music" was first delivered as a lecture in 1954 at the Stuttgart Week of New Music, and repeated on several occasions before it was published in *Der Monat* in May 1955 and in an expanded form in 1956 in *Dissonanzen*, a collection of Adorno's essays. The essay confounds the stereotype of Adorno as an apologist at any price for new music. Here he upbraids serious composition of the postwar generation as "Music Festival music." He does not criticize the exclusion of new music, but its mindless toleration: "It [new music] is tolerated as the private activity of specialists, a cultural necessity in some not quite clear fashion (p. 100)." In words that may seem to parallel those of any conservative detractor of modern music, the philosopher best known for his defense of the autonomy of art lambasts modern music for having lost touch with the world: "No one is actually challenged [by this music], no one recognizes himself in it, or senses in it any binding claim to truth (p. 100)." When these lines were first heard they brought conservative music critics to the brink of ecstasy; immediately it was quoted in defense of restorative music. It is not surprising that younger composers felt betrayed, that Adorno had played into the hands of reaction, that he had overdone it by repeating the essay and publishing it so widely.[11]

The essay, however, did not mark any shift in Adorno's understanding of modern music. He had always been critical of it. His most important book on music, *The Philosophy of New Music*, far from being blind adulation of Schoenberg, is concerned with the immanent tendency of his music toward meaninglessness. While the introduction of serialism was a necessity with which Adorno sides, he nevertheless found that Schoenberg's free atonal, expressionist, works were superior to the later serial compositions. His explanation of Schoenberg's development is important for understanding the "Aging of the New Music," basic to which is Adorno's concept of musical material, which he developed most succinctly in *The Philosophy of New Music*. Musical material has usually been conceived as an inventory of physical resources, somewhat along the lines of conceiving the material of social history as a list of those present in the period to be studied. Adorno, in contrast, conceived of

11. Cf. Heinz-Klaus Metzger, "Just Who is Growing Old?" in *Die Reihe*, no. 4 (1958), pp. 63-82. Metzger actually drew up a juxtaposition of lines from Adorno's essay with those of another music critic known for his complete rejection of modern music.

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musical material as sedimented history. Following a thought that he first presented in his early lecture, "The Idea of Natural History," he described this sedimentation as occurring in such a way that the more the material appears as nature, as second nature, the more intensively historical it is. As he wrote, the elements of music "bear historical necessity within themselves the more perfectly, the less they are immediately readable as historical characters."[12] To the extent that composition is successful, it transforms nature back into history; it releases — gives expression to — the history sedimented in the material.[13] Schoenberg's discovery was that the more that composition is carried out without recourse to any pre-given form, the more rigorously a polyphonic nominalism is pursued, the more the material can be rationally dominated because the material itself is nominalistic. Compositional nominalism subordinates the material to the composer altogether, yet with the result that the composer can potentially follow the material "where it wants to go" to an altogether greater degree than in tonal music. Form becomes the voice of the material in a new way: expression is transformed from the narration of emotions, whose arch figure is the Baroque *Affektenlehre*, to a deposition [*Protokol*] of expressive contents. New music no longer wants to be the image of expression but the expression itself. Whereas romantic expression hovers over the work and gives the work a reflection of the infinite, the expression of new music is that of the collapse of the self: here the extremes of expression and of expression and non-expression touch.[14] The intention of the introduction of serialism was to bind together the horizontal and vertical dimensions of music. However, the total control that was achieved did not succeed in the unification of the dimensions of succession and simultaneity, but instead hardened into

12. Adorno, *Die Philosophie der neuen Musik*, *G. S.* 12, *op. cit.*, p. 38-39. Cf. *The Philosophy of Modern Music*, trans. Anne Mitchell and Wesley Blomster, (New York: Seabury Press, 1973), p. 32.

13. In the "Idea of Natural History" Adorno writes: "If the question of the relation of nature and history is to be seriously posed, then it only offers any chance of solution if it is possible *to comprehend historical being in its most extreme historical determinacy, where it is most historical, as natural being, or if it were possible to comprehend nature as an historical being where it seems to rest most deeply in itself as nature.*" Translated in: Hullot-Kentor, *The Problem of Natural History in the Philosophy of T. W. Adorno*, (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1985), p. 274-275. This dialectic keeps moving: when composition releases the history stored in second nature, it is first nature that is expressed. In the language of Adorno's early essay, "second nature is in truth first nature (*Ibid.*, p. 292)."

14. Adorno's thesis of the transformation of expression in new music is a reformulation of Benjamin's distinction of symbol and allegory in the second part of *The Origin of the German Tragic Drama*.

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a mathematical system of rules that predetermined all intervals, making them in essence equivalent. Composition became the quotation of prearranged material, giving it a legalistic quality. Insofar as serial composition is as a whole derived from the theme, theme became the totality of the work and as total disappeared, dissolving the differentiation of the composition. To compensate for the resulting diffuseness, rhythm takes over the role of establishing unity, which was once the expressive achievement of the theme. The course of new music, then, insofar as it is a movement in which control separates from the material and becomes irrational, is toward the exclusion of the new.

Theory of Aging

Adorno finished the *Philosophy of New Music* in Los Angeles, the year before he returned to Germany. After his return he became a professor at the Darmstadt school of composition, the focal point of musical development in Europe at the time. There Adorno came into contact with the composers he would criticize — generally not by name — in the "Aging of the New Music": Luigi Nono, Karel Groeyvaerts, Karl-Heinz Stockhausen, and Pierre Boulez. They — and most of all Boulez — were the key figures of total serialism, "totally organized music," which was at its height in Europe between 1947 and 1953.[15] Adorno could not have been surprised by the direction these composers took. They followed the trajectory of automatism, which Adorno had recognized as a potential in Schoenberg's later work, by pursuing serial technique beyond pitch to every parameter of music: rhythm, intensities, and timbre. The music that resulted is effectively a collage of prefabricated organizations, which gives it a "pointillistic" quality[16] (by which term Adorno refers to it in the "Aging"). Just as total serialization was an extension of Schoenberg's work, Adorno's criticism of the movement was itself a further formulation of his own critique of the aporias of Schoenberg's music.

As in *The Philosophy of New Music*, the focus of Adorno's criticism in the "Aging" is the fate of the musical material: "In the leveling and neutralization of its material the aging of the new music becomes tangible (p. 100)." This was the result of total serialism's replacement of composition by mathematical devices of organization. Adorno was not

15. For a full account of this movement see Paul Griffiths, *Modern Music: The Avant Garde Since 1945*, (New York: George Braziller, 1981), pp. 19-88.

16. Cf. Gyoergy Ligeti, "Metamorphoses of Musical Form," in *Die Reihe* (London: Universal Editions, 1960), p. 5.

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alone in this criticism.[17] In the same years Milton Babbit criticized total serialism for confusing the preparation of materials with composition: "Mathematics — or, more correctly, arithmetic — is used, not as a means of characterizing or discovering general systematic, pre-compositional relationships, but as a compositional devise."[18] Adorno's critique, however, went beyond Babbit's. Adorno showed that what is fundamental to the subreption of mathematics for composition — to the estrangement of technique from the material — is the result of the fetishization of the material. This is a surprising idea first because obtuseness to the material and infatuation with it appear contradictory, and secondly because one might think that, given Adorno's own concept of musical material, his theory of composition would itself be based on its fetishization and unlikely to raise such an objection. How this all fits together is clarified by Adorno's theory of the aging of the new music.

The aging of the new music did not fall on it by bad luck, spoiling a good thing. Rather the senescence of the movement was implicit in its birth, which was its separation from popular music: "the more the market debased music into a childish game, the more emphatically true music pressed toward maturity through spiritualization [*Vergeistigung*] (p. 104)." A great deal would need to be said about Adorno's idea of spiritualization to fully elucidate it, but in brief it refers to art's movement toward autonomy. In the progress toward autonomy, Adorno recognized an antimony. Spiritualization is an effort to rescue art from trivialization by mass culture, yet the autonomy of art immanently destroys it. How this occurs is complex: the decline of autonomous art was predicated on its initial success. In the course of spiritualization, art rejected all pre-determined forms at the same time that there was an intensification of the expression of art works; this intensification was attributed to the material, as if it were meaningful in itself: "this misleads a composer to sacrifice the ability, in so far as he has it, to form constellations and encourages him to believe that the preparation of primitive musical materials is equivalent to music itself (p.105)." The fetishization of the material is of a part with its abstract organization because form itself is a subjective act, a capacity that fetishization paralyzes: "confidence in the meaningfulness of abstract material" leads the subject to fail "to recognize that it, itself, releases the meaning from the material." Only "the power of the subject . . . brings an

17. Ligeti, *op. cit.*, agreed with Adorno in regard to total serialism as a movement, but thought Adorno was wrong in the case of Boulez and several other "elite" composers.

18. Quoted in Griffiths, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

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object entirely to itself (p. 114)." Only subjectivity can mediate the self-expression of the musical material, yet just this requisite subjectivity is paralyzed in total serialism by the fetishization of the material. Thus the history of modern music that Adorno sketches in "The Aging of the New Music" comes to this: the loss of expression in total serialism, which is Adorno's fundamental criticism of the movement, originates in the separation of serious music from popular music, and this loss is the point at which new music again converges with popular music.

Boulez and Benjamin

Obviously Adorno's theory of the aging of new music does not envision any propitious unity of serious and popular music as a solution to the current situation. Both sides are damaged; they are driven in different though related ways toward similar rigidifications, central to which is the separation of subjectivity from its material. And this issue is not only the nexus of Adorno's critique of music, from Schoenberg on; it is central to every sentence Adorno ever wrote. One reason for quoting extensively from the "Aging" is that in Adorno's comments on the "sacrifice" of the "ability to form constellations," and the role of subjectivity in the release of meaning from material, the relation of Adorno's critique of total serialism to the rest of his work, beyond his musicological studies, becomes vivid. This will be particularly evident to those who have Adorno's critique of Benjamin's writings on Baudelaire in mind. Just as Adorno criticized the serialists in 1954 for the fetishization of material and the failure to actually release this material, in his often cited correspondence of 1938 with Benjamin, he criticized Benjamin for depending on the unrealizable hope that the material would speak for itself: "You superstitiously attribute to material enumeration a power of illumination that is never kept."[19] Parallel to his critique of serialism, Adorno claimed that Benjamin's study had fallen under the spell of the material; its organization, though seeming to conjure a cosmic historical context; was "located at the crossroads of magic and positivism."[20] Adorno's critique of Benjamin's montage of quotations, and the ideal of a work composed strictly of quotations, later became the critique of serialist compositions as montages of quotations of prefabricated material. As is well known, Adorno's criticism of Benjamin's essay was one of a failure of theory. Clearly, the remark

19. The crucial letters of this correspondence are in *Aesthetics and Politics*, trans. Harry Zohn, (London: NLR, 1977), pp. 126-41.

20. *Ibid.*, p.129.

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in which he drew together what was at stake in this criticism must have been painful for Benjamin, though the significance of Adorno's comment beyond this is somewhat obscure: "This . . . brings me to the center of my criticism. The impression that your entire study conveys . . . is that you have done violence to yourself."[21] The painfulness of the comment, which deeply rankles Benjamin's followers, has been skimmed as a psychological barb attached to a harsh criticism to make it sting for keeps, has made it difficult to perceive why Adorno called this remark "the center of my criticism." Importantly, in terms of the continuity of Adorno's thought, this comment can be illuminated by a passage from "The Aging of the New Music" in which he explains why the serialists failed to do justice to musical material: "As if objectivity were the result of a kind of subtraction, the exclusion of an ornament and were nothing other than a residue, it is supposed that through an absence of subjectivity one would be empowered with an objectively binding force, the destruction of which is blamed on the preponderance of a subjectiveness that in fact no longer exists (p. 114)." The failure of total serialism to release the material, to gain objectivity, was the result of the exclusion of subjectivity, just as it was the failure of theory in Benjamin's work. Both the serialists and Benjamin hoped to assure transcendence by the exclusion of subjectivity. The damage Benjamin did to himself was damage done to the material, which is the most significant criticism of failed theory.

For Benjamin and the total serialists of the 50s, subjectivity was a demon, just as it is in every popular critique of the enlightenment: what went wrong was the rise of subjectivity; its domination of nature separated humanity from nature; the recovery of nature requires the exclusion of subjectivity: This is the key position that Adorno was concerned to counter not only in his arguments with Benjamin and the serialists, but throughout his writings. Adorno was working on this criticism from the time of his first published philosophical work, *Kierkegaard: Construction of the Aesthetic*. In this work, Adorno showed that Kierkegaard's philosophy is an effort to achieve transcendence, to escape nature, by the sacrifice of the intellect in the doctrine of the paradox and ultimately in the leap of faith. Yet this sacrifice only results in subordination to nature[22] from which Kierkegaard's philosophy wanted to escape. Kierkegaard's doctrine turns out to be a ruse of self-assertion:

21. *Aesthetics and Politics*, *op. cit.* p. 130.

22. In the "Aging" nature is equivalently the "material" to which the compositional self is subordinated.

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"through sacrifice he [Kierkegaard] asserts himself."[23] In the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Adorno developed this critique of Kierkegaard — of self-assertion through self-sacrifice — as the form of history altogether. The enlightnment resulted in the subordination to that nature from which enlightenment was to free humanity because, out of the terror of primitive scarcity, history became a process of self-assertion through self-renunciation. Knowledge separates from its material and loses its *telos*. The counter-figure to this dialectic, which Adorno developed first in his book on Kierkegaard and later in his criticism of Benjamin and total serialism, is the idea of obejectivity by way of radicalization of subjectivity. The real interest of Adorno's work is that his critique of enlightenment is an effort to fulfill enlightenment. He is entirely on the side of the dialectical autonomy of subjectivity and the self's attainment of real control over nature. Real autonomy, however, would be the liberation of nature. Any effort to escape subjectivity, any damage to subjectivity, results in the assertion of the subject as absolute. The sacrifice of subjectivity, of which Adorno accuses Boulez and Bejamin, is actually a ruse of self-assertion, the establishment of pseudo-objectivity.[24]

True subjectivity transcends subjectivity. Subjectivity is, as identity, the principle of domination, but it is only subjectivity that raises the critique of the domination of nature.[25] In Hegelian terms — an origin of Adorno's position — true subjectivity extinguishes itself in the object as memory of nature. In art, subjectivity is the principle of form, the coherence of the work, through which alone the work speaks. In art, technique — the forces of production, ultimately subjectivity — is liberation: "The result of artistic technique is, as true domination, always at the same time also the opposite of domination; it is the development of subjective

23. *Kierkegaard: Construction of the Aesthetic*, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1989).

24. What distinguishes Benjamin and Boulez is the difference between criticism, the elucidation of truth-content in concepts, and art, the mimetic presentation of truth-content. It has not been possible to work through this issue here.

25. "Too European": A frequent criticism of Adorno's musicology and of his philosophy in general is that it is eurocentric. Adorno, it is claimed, was only concerned with Western music and thought. To respond to the former critics: Actually, Adorno was familiar with Asian and Indian music; they have so long been important to Western composers that it is not possible to be fully cognizant of contemporary music and not be familiar with the music of other continents. But this response is really not to the point. There is no getting out of European music, anymore than out of subjectivity, by pointing the other way. This is abstract negation, tourism. Dialectics, on the other hand, knows only one way out, and that is through: identity becomes non-identity. This thought is a culmination of Western thought. Abstract negation is not European enough.

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subjective sensibility for receptiveness to the impulses of what itself is not the subject."[26] A good gloss on this passage can be found in Adorno's book on film music, *Composing for the Films*: The dominating rule of the composer "is legitimate only if it goes beyond itself entirely; only if it gains an expressive element. It is this expressive element that makes the work 'something more than just having been made'."[27] Only subjectivity can follow the material "where it wants to go," and achieve what is more than what the self posits. This is not guaranteed by a willing eye for the cosmos, or openness to being. On the contrary, the inner form of cosmic posturing is sacrificial and the compositions that result (as is the case in much of Cage's music) does not go beyond a sort of bureaucratic file-shuffling. To follow the material where it wants to go requires all possible subjective resistance and spontaneity, as Adorno says in constant reformulations: the material must always be broken out of the nexuses in which it is organized: it is only possible to do justice to the material by its transformation. He expressed the same thought in a somewhat different context, but it applies to art when it is kept in mind that Adorno conceived of art as the memory of the history of suffering: tradition can only be maintained by its resistance. This dialectic holds the whole complexity of Adorno's thought: the division between the composer and the material is only overcome through resistance to the material. This proposition is, of course, allied with Benjamin's dictum that history must "be rubbed against the grain." But this convergence of Benjamin and Adorno throws a light onto Benjamin's *sparti pris* for mass culture in which his conformism appears. There is clearly a deeper link between Benjamin's work and mass culture than his political confession: the radio's "helpless, helpless, helpless," bears the strongest affinity for the ideal of a work composed entirely out of quotations. The appeal of Benjamin's theory of culture to radical politics may be what is least radical about it: selflessness that has always been the form of self-assertion. Much of Benjamin's popularity is his martyrdom: the pathos of the popular from the rip at the knees in the jeans to a pin through the nose.

Peculiarly, whereas Benjamin's attachment to popular culture automatically won for his writings the seal of "praxis," Adorno's writings are thought to be without any reflection on the issue of what is to be done. This deserves reconsideration. As Adorno wrote: "Correctly

26. "Vers une musique informelle," *G. S.* 17, *op. cit.*, p. 537-38.
27. *Composing for the Films*, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

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understood, praxis is . . . what the object wants: it follows its neediness."[28] In *The Philosophy of New Music*, Adorno came to the conclusion that the construction of the material resulted in the loss of expression; what he suggests is more radical construction. Construction is both the ability to manipulate the material and to break it out of the forms in which it has rigidified. The recommendation therefore means: more subjectivity. This is not a request for arbitrariness, but for the freeing of the social forces of production, which in art are forces of expression. This recommendation holds equally good for popular music. Though, if popular music followed this recommendation, it would no longer be popular.

28. "Marginalien zu Theorie und Praxis," *G. S.* 10 (2), *op. cit.*, p. 764.

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The Aging of the New Music

T. W. Adorno[1]

To speak of the aging of the New Music seems paradoxical. Yet music that has its essence in the refusal to go along with things as they are, and has its justification in giving shape to what the conventional superficies of daily life hide and what is otherwise condemned to silence by the culture industry — which threatens to acquire New Music as a wholly owned subsidiary — precisely this music has begun to show symptoms of false satisfaction. The malicious objection of reactionaries that scholasticism has crept into modernism and is spreading can only be met by the critical reflection sedimented in the works themselves. The concept of New Music is incompatible with an affirmative sound, the confirmation of what is, even if this were beloved "being" itself. When music for the first time came to completely doubt all that, it became New Music. The shock it dealt to its audience in its heroic period — at the time of the first performance of the *Altenberg Songs* of Alban Berg or the first performance of the *Sacre du Printemps* of Stravinsky in Paris[2] — cannot simply be attributed to unfamiliarity and strangeness, as the good natured apology would have it; rather, it is the result of something actually distressing and confused. Whoever denies

1. "Das Altern der neuen Musik," *Gesammelte Schriften* [hereafter: *G. S.*] 14, edited by Rolf Tiedemann (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1973), pp. 143-167. Translated and edited by Robert Hullot-Kentor and Frederic Will. A peculiar, abbreviated and completely confabulated paraphrase of Adorno's essay, translated from the French, was published in *The Score* in December 1956. In 1958, an article in *Die Reihe*, no. 4, "Just Who Is Growing Old," by Heinz-Klaus Metzger (pp. 63-82) incorporated several newly translated passages of Adorno's essay. This latter translation has been usefully consulted on several occasions. All notes are by the translators.

2. 1912 and 1913, respectively.

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this and claims that the new art is as beautiful as the traditional one, does it a real disservice; he praises in it what this music rejects so long as it unflinchingly follows its own impulse.

The aging of the New Music means nothing else than that this critical impulse is ebbing away. It is falling into contradiction with its own idea, the price of which is its own aesthetic substance and coherence. The "stabilization of music," the danger of the dangerless noticeable as early as 1927,[3] became even stronger after the world catastrophe. Indeed, on no account, as another cliche would have it, has the fermenting must clarified into ripe, sweet wine. No valid accomplishment, no rounded masterpiece, took the place of the excesses of certain devotees of *Sturm und Drang*. The striving for masterpieces is part of that conformism renounced by New Music. While the aficionados of modernism, whom one meets on every side nowadays, forget what the whole really should be, the quality and binding force of musical works evaporate; the waning of inner tension and the waning of formative power are interrelated, and have the same root. One could hardly claim that the creations of the mid-twentieth century are superior to *Pierrot Lunaire*, *Erwartung*, *Wozzeck*, the lyrics of Webern or the early outbursts of Stravinsky and Bartok. Even if in the meantime the raw material of composition was purified of slag and unhomogeneous vestiges of the past, and if somehow the possibility developed of a rigorous new musical phrase, it is still questionable whether such a purification of all disturbing intrusions would be of service to the cause of music, and not simply to a technocratic attitude, in whose eager concern for consistency something entirely too binding, violent, and unartistic announces itself. In any case, advances in the material have hardly benefitted the quality of the works that use them. A blind belief in progress is required not to notice how little progress has been made since the early twenties, how much has been lost, how tame and in many respects how impoverished most music has become. This must be pointed out without hesitation by whoever keeps faith with the New Music and hopes to help it better than by accommodation to the *Zeitgeist*,

3. Adorno is apparently referring to an essay "Die stabilisierte Musik," which he wrote in 1927. In this essay, a review of a Frankfurt music festival of that year, he writes that "Music has come into harmony with the world [stabilisert sich mit der Welt]; should anyone be surprised that the music has gotten worse?" *G. S.*, 19, p. 101. What is strange about this reference is that this essay was only published posthumously. Adorno, however, wrote a great number of articles in these early years and did not always keep clearly in mind what of his work had been published and what had not. Many essays were only published posthumously.

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to the servile acknowledgment of the status quo.

Neither was radical music replaced by a less embattled music, as those theories that appeal to the wisdom of the course of the generations would like to convince their contemporaries; music did not find its way comfortably back to the tradition that had been demolished by the atonal revolt. To argue this position theoretically would be as senseless as the praxis of that moribund music that copies the music of the ages and polishes it up with a scattering of false notes. It is already questionable whether the forgetting of Bach and the victory of the "gallant style"[4] 200 years ago were such a healthy reaction and positive force as music history so frequently declares them to have been. Whoever reflects on the course of musical history should also consider this: that although the development of 18th century homophony was fundamental for the work of Haydn and Mozart, still the loss of a living Bach tradition created great difficulties for the Vienna composers, difficulties resulting in true defects of composition that are only now becoming recognizable.[5] It is perfectly certain, however, that the music that currently makes up the greater part of what is composed, and which might be called Music Festival music, did not give expression to a freshly burgeoning primary experience, as was the case in spite of everything after Bach's death. On the contrary, this Music Festival music feeds essentially off of the discoveries of the New Music, while at the same time treating it arbitrarily, indifferently, thinning it out, bending it out of shape. Perhaps a drastic analogy from literature may be permitted here. It is drawn from a work whose spiritual origins are allied with those of the New Music: *The Last Days of Mankind* by Karl Kraus. He was close to Strindberg, who often referred to Krauss gratefully as a spiritual ally. The first edition of Kraus' drama contained a title-page picture of the execution of the deputy Battisti, accused by the Austrians of spying: in the center was a ghoulish photograph of a merrily laughing hangman. That picture — along with another that was, if possible, even more shocking — was left out of the new edition published after the Second World War. As a result of this seemingly superficial change something decisive was transformed in the work. A similar transformation, a little less crass, occurred in New Music. The

4. An early classical style, marked by simplicity, wit, and light melodies; it developed in opposition to the so-called "learned" contrapuntal church style.

5. Adorno is referring to difficulties in the relation of counterpoint and harmony. See his "Die Funktion der Kontrapunkt in der neuen Musik," *G. S.* 16, pp.155-62 for a discussion of the relation of Schoenberg and Bach.

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sounds remain the same. But the anxiety that gave shape to its great founding works has been repressed. Perhaps that anxiety has become so overwhelming in reality that its undisguised image would scarcely be bearable: to recognize the aging of the New Music does not mean to misjudge this aging as something accidental. But art that unconsciously obeys such repression and makes itself a game, because it has become too weak for seriousness, renounces its claim to truth, which is its only *raison d'être*. When this art asserts the superiority of its exalted spirit over the confusions of mere existence it achieves nothing more than an alibi for its own bad conscience. More than a hundred years ago Kierkegaard, speaking as a theologian, said that where once a dreadful abyss yawned a railroad bridge now stretches, from which the passengers can look comfortably down into the depths. The situation of music is no different. Even if the historical force behind this development were so overpowering that it made all resistance vain, it would at the very least be worth destroying the illusion that such art is still what it claims to be, or is held to be, in a trade whose standard is conformity.

Included here are not only camp followers and epigones, of whom there have always been plenty. The symptoms have worked their way into the compositions of the most gifted and, according to their own principles, most uncompromising composers. Cases like those of Stravinsky and Hindemith, who more or less explicitly abjured what filled their youth, what in them was once so fascinating, are not at issue here. Their restorative efforts, just like those of certain converted surrealist painters, are in any case, from a cultural-philosophical standpoint, a renunciation of the concept of New Music. They stick to the deceptive image of a *musica perennis*. But even Bela Bartok, from whom such inclinations were very distant, began at a certain point to separate himself from his own past. In a speech given in New York he explained that a composer like he, whose roots were in folk music, could ultimately not do without tonality — an astounding statement for the Bartok who unhesitatingly resisted all populist temptations and chose exile and poverty when the shadow of Fascism passed over Europe. In fact his later works, like the violin concerto, actually count as traditional music, though indeed they are not cramped and narrow resurrections of a distant past, but almost unabashed continuations of Brahms; they are late, posthumous masterpieces, certainly, but domesticated, no longer heralds of the threateningly eruptive, the ungrasped. The development of his work has a peculiar retrespective effect. In its light many of his most radical compositions, like the first violin sonata,

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appear much more harmless than their sound and harmonies. What once seemed like a prairie fire ultimately reveals itself as a Czardas, so that even the rather obvious piano composition *Im Freien* sounds today like dried out Debussey, a sort of corroded mood music: Bartok's guardian angel is Liszt's *Mazeppa*.[6] Even among those who were once leaders of New Music, more than one lagged behind his avant garde claims, more than one lived to some degree beyond his spiritual-cultural means. The naivete of the musical specialist, who attends to his metier without actually participating in objective spirit, is partially responsible for this. The rift between society and the New Music runs through modern musicians themselves in more ways than one. While they embrace New Music as if it were an unavoidable task, their own inculcated taste balks against it; their musical experience is not free from the element of the non-contemporaneous. As soon as they were struck by the failures of the music of the past, those especially capitulated who had unhesitatingly taken up the New because they knew too little about the Old.

Thus the aging of the New Music is to be taken much more seriously than as a simple revolt or as the appeasement after which the classical ideal yearns. There is no sense in pointing, today, to the feebleness of neo-classicism; in the face of the pallor and monotony of the recent works of this school, the more talented young composers are obviously repelled. All the more urgent therefore to understand the present situation of what now attracts the disgruntled and rebellious: twelve-tone technique. Schoenberg's own misgivings are enlightening for anyone who is no more pleased by the popularity of twelve-tone technique — as historically necessary as ever — than, say, by the popularity of Kafka. Twelve-tone technique has its justification only in the presentation of complex musical contents, which cannot otherwise be organized. Separated from this function, it degenerates into a deluded system. While New Music, and particularly Schoenberg's achievement, is stamped as twelve-tone composition, and thus handily pigeon-holed, the fact that a very large and perhaps, qualitatively, the decisive part of this production was composed prior to the invention of this technique or independently of it, should give reason to pause. Schoenberg himself consistently refused to teach what the music marketplace had falsified into a system. One may think, for instance, of Anton von Webern's

6. Mazeppa, the Ukrainian Cossack, whose insurrection and death is the material of Liszt's symphonic poem (1854) of the same name.

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Five Movements for String Quartet, which today sounds as contemporary as on its first day,[7] and technically has not been surpassed. These movements, whose composition now lies 45 years in the past, had already broken with tonality; they know, as one says, only dissonances; they are not dodecaphonic. A shudder surrounds each of these dissonances. They are felt as something uncanny, and are introduced by their author with fear and trembling. Right into the treatment of the sounds it is possible to follow how carefully Webern lay hold of them. Only with hesitancy does he separate himself from each and every sound; each one he holds fast until its expressive values are exhausted. He shrinks away from ruling sovereignly over them while at the same time he respects his own discoveries. This is not the least source of the undiminished power of Webern's tenderness. Now, to be sure, the quality of occurring "for the first time" cannot be preserved. One must renounce it, go beyond it, as soon as those fresh effects have become sedimented and rigidified. But everything depends on whether such chords can free themselves from the spell of their isolation — can shoot together as large totalities in which they assert themselves — or if they simply renounce their individual character, if they are manipulated as though they were without significance. In the levelling and neutralization of its material, the aging of the New Music becomes tangible: it is the arbitrariness of a radicalness for which nothing is any longer at stake. Without stakes in a double sense: neither emotionally, because through the inhibition *vis-à-vis* such chords and the happiness in them their substance, their power of expression, their relation to the subject has been lost; nor in actuality, for almost no one gets excited anymore about that twelve-tone technique that is served up at all music festivals. It is tolerated as the private activity of specialists, a cultural necessity in some not quite clear fashion, entrusted wholly to the experts; no one is actually challenged, no one recognizes himself in it, or senses in it any binding claim to truth. Twelve-tone technique cannot be conceived without its antithesis, the explosive power of the musically individual, which even today still lives in Webern's early works. Twelve-tone technique is the inexorable clamp that holds together what no less powerfully strives to break apart. If it is employed without being tested against such contrary forces, if it is employed where there is nothing counteracting it to be organized, then it is simply a waste of energy. Judgment is passed over innumerable contemporary twelve-tone

7. It was composed in 1909; in 1930 it was transcribed for string orchestra.

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compositions by the fact that in them relatively simple musical occurrences stand in a relatively simple musical interrelation, the establishment of which by no means demanded serial technique in the first place. Such technique becomes what in mathematics is called the convergence of an equation, a simple error.

Yet among the intransigent, who would as far as possible like to pursue consequentiality beyond Schoenberg, one meets a remarkable mixture of sectarianism and academicism. Among the major exponents of the New Music, including Schoenberg himself, it is not difficult to uncover traditional elements, particularly in its musical language, that is, in its expressive character and the inner construction of the music, in contrast to the entirely transformed musical material itself. This is crudely evident in Schoenberg's opera fragment *Moses and Aron*, which had its first concert performance a few years ago in Hamburg.[8] In matters of staging, text, expression, its broad gestures, it remains true to the traditional style of musical drama in spite of all its purely musical innovations. The same could be demonstrated with the greatest detail in Schoenberg's compositional techniques: thematic construction, exposition, transitions, continuation, fields of tension and release, etc. are all scarcely distinguishable from traditional, especially Brahmsian, techniques, even in his most daring works. It is hardly possible to conceive of composition of a high order other than as the most detailed meaningful articulation of the appropriate musical material. But the available material, right up to the present, have all grown out of the soil of tonality. When they are transferred to non-tonal material, certain inconsistencies result, a kind of break between musical subject-matter and the forming of the music. Schoenberg's musical sovereignty enabled him to master this break. But the antagonisms with which he saw himself confronted are not to be silenced. For all of those features to which he held fast with sublime naivete — such as certain figures of the early tonal *First Chamber Symphony* that were maintained in the later twelve-tone *Fourth Quartet*[9] — cannot, with regard to their function, simply be transposed out of their original soil. The very concept of a transition, for example, presupposes various harmonic levels of modulation; stripped of its harmonic task it withers up all too easily into a formal reminiscence. Even the central category — the theme — is difficult to maintain when, as in twelve-tone technique, every tone is

8. Only the first two of the three acts of this opera are complete (1930-32) and they were first presented in 1954.

9. 1906 and 1937, respectively.

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equally determined, equally thematic; in twelve-tone compositions themes persist largely as rudiments of an older period. On the other hand, it is only by means of these and related traditional categories that the coherence of the music, its sense, the authentic composition, in so far as it is more than mere arrangement, has been preserved in the midst of twelve-tone technique. Schoenberg's conservatism in this respect is not attributable to a lack of consistency, but to his fear that composition would otherwise be sacrificed to the prefabrication of the material. His most recent followers blithely short-circuit the antinomy that he rightly tried to deal with. They are intentionally indifferent to whether the music makes sense and is articulated — a consideration that caused Schoenberg's hesitations — and believe that the preparation of tones is already composition as soon as one has dismissed from composition everything by which it actually becomes a composition. They never get farther than abstract negation, and take off on an empty, high-spirited trip, through thinkably complex scores, in which nothing actually occurs; this seems to authorize them to write one score after another, without any constraints at all.

This development already set in with Schoenberg's pupil, Anton von Webern. His later works, which precisely in their skeletal simplicity are extremely difficult, attempt to overcome the contradiction by fusing the fugue and the sonata. These last works attempt to organize the musical-linguistic means so entirely in accordance with the new subject-matter, the twelve-tone rows, that he occasionally comes very close to renouncing the musical material altogether and reducing music to naked processes in the material, to the fate of the rows as such, though admittedly without ever completely sacrificing musical meaning entirely. Recently a group of composers have pursued this direction farther. At their head stands Pierre Boulez, student of Messiaen and Leibowitz, a highly cultured and exceptionally gifted musician, with the highest sense of form and with a power that is communicated even where he disavows subjectivity altogether. He and his disciples aspire to dispose of every "compositional freedom" as pure caprice, along with every vestige of traditional musical idiom: in fact, every subjective impulse is in music at the same time an impulse of musical language. These composers have above all attempted to bring rhythm under the strict domination of twelve-tone procedure, and ultimately to replace composition altogether with an objective-calculatory ordering of intervals, pitches, long and short durations, degrees of loudness; an integral rationalization such as has never before been envisaged in

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music. The capriciousness of this legalism, however, the mere semblance of objectivity in a system that has simply been decreed, becomes apparent in the inappropriateness of its rules to the structural interrelations of the music as it develops, relations that rules cannot do away with. The merely thought up is always also too little thought out.[10] The basis of this serialism is a static idea of music: the precise correspondences and equivalences that total rationalization requires are founded on the presupposition that the identical element that recurs in music is indeed actually equivalent, as it would be in a schematic spatial representation. The static pattern of notes is confused with the event that the notes signify. But as long as music takes place entirely in time, it is dynamic in such a way that in the course of the music the identical becomes non-identical just as the non-identical can become the identical as, e.g., in an abbreviated reprise. What is referred to as the architecture of great traditional music rests precisely on these effects, not on musical relations defined by geometrical symmetry. The most powerful effects of Beethoven's form depend on the recurrence of something, which was once present simply as a theme, that reveals itself as a result and thus acquires a completely transformed sense. Often the meaning of the preceding passage is only fully established by this later recurrence. The onset of a reprise can engender a feeling of something extraordinary having occurred earlier, even if the perceived event cannot in the slightest be located at that specific point. The pointillist constructivists not only rob themselves of these possibilities of authentic form, they fail to see that against their own will temporal interrelations are established and give a completely transformed local value to what on paper seems to be an identical repetition. The secure balance, which these composers have calculated on the page, has not actually been achieved. Their overblown concern for security destroys their security: because the balance of the musical elements works together only too well, from a static point of view, it is overturned by the immanent dynamics of the music. The balance gets lost in the actual course of the music, the one thing of aesthetic importance here.

The loss of tension is not merely a symptom of aging, but can be traced all the way back to the origins of New Music: what has today become evident casts its shadow back over the heroic period. The expressionist Schoenberg was allied with the *Der Blaue Reiter*; songs by him, Webern, and Berg were published there, and Kandinsky's manifesto,

10. Das bloß Ausgedachte ist immer auch zu wenig durchdacht (p. 151).

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"On the Spiritual in Art," also includes the impulse of atonality. Music wanted finally to do justice to the Kantian precept that nothing sensuous is sublime, and the more the market debased music into a childish game, the more emphatically true music pressed toward maturity through spiritualization. Music had to pay a price for this, which Valéry suspected was the case with all new art. In New Music this price is its senescence. The emancipation from pre-established forms and structures of musical material was predicated on a presupposition, common to expressionist painting in so far as the latter based the spiritualization of its technique on the idea that all colors as such, that the material elements of painting in themselves, have meaning. The totally new, many-layered sounds of the New Music were conceived of as bearers of expression. And this they were, but in a mediated way, not immediately. Their individual values depended partly on their relation to traditional sounds that they negated and through this negation preserved in memory, and partly on the position of the sounds in the structure of the compositions as a whole, which they at the same time contributed to changing. On account of their newness, however, the expressive qualities were at first attributed to isolated phenomena of the sounds themselves. This was the origin of a superstitious belief in intrinsically meaningful primitive elements, which in truth owe their existence to history, and whose meaning is itself historical. Even radically-minded artists barely withstood such superstition, and easily slipped over into what was most antipathetic to them, namely arts and crafts: cold-blue sounds, an evil red, are not at all so different from the noble materials of batik veils carried in rhythmical gymnastics. Thoroughly arts and crafts concerns like those involving *Tonfarbenmusik*,[11] which became popular some thirty years ago, early on emphasized that side of Expressionism: the modernistic side, as opposed to that of modernity. In fact, what is produced today under the headings of pointillistic music and integrally rationalized music is only too closely related to *Tonfarbenmusik* and the like: infatuation with the material along with blindness toward what is made out of it resulting from the fiction that the material speaks for itself, from an effectively primitive symbolism. To be sure the material does speak, but only in those constellations in which the art-work positions it; it was this capacity to organize the material

11. "Tonfarbenmusik" [tone-color music] develops correspondances between sounds and colors, which was an important movement in the first part of this century. Schoenberg's *Die glückliche Hand*, (1910-1913), for example, prescribes colors to be projected onto a screen on stage during the performance.

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and not the mere discovery of individual sounds that from the very start constituted Schoenberg's greatness. The inflated idea of the material, however, which clings tenaciously to life, misleads a composer into sacrificing the ability, in so far as he has it, to form constellations and encourages him to believe that the preparation of primitive musical materials is equivalent to music itself. Something purely irrational is hidden in the midst of rationalization, a confidence in the meaningfulness of abstract material, in which the subject fails to recognize that it, itself, releases the meaning from the material. The subject is blinded by the hope that those materials might lead it out of the exile of its own subjectivity. As long as New Music was alive, it mastered this illusion through the power of form; today it is losing that power, and it explains away its formal powerlessness as a triumph of cosmic substantiality. The situation, like that of restorative literature, borders closer on *art nouveau* than has been imagined.

At the same time, of course, the expansion of musical material has gone ahead limitlessly. The trust in the eloquence of the subject matter [*Stoff*] was always allied with a second form of trust: the trust that the discovery of intentionless layers, like new snow still unmarked by the imprint of the subject and the objectivation of the subject's traces in the form of conventionalizations of expression, would make pure immediacy possible. But if one leaves out of consideration the bichromatic subdivisions of the tonal system — which were never accurately absorbed by the hearing of even the most refined composers, subdivisions that sound like chromatics that have been further divided up and thus run counter to the effort of New Music to establish independent secondary degrees of the scale — then the possibilities of new sounds within the sphere of the twelve equally tempered halftones are virtually exhausted. It is not that all the sound combinations have already been used: ever since the emancipation from the system of triads their mathematical possibilities have been virtually unlimited. The issue here, however, is that of quality, not quantity. What is actually composed, and what is not composed, out of these combinations is already a matter of accident; the important fact is that the space has been staked out, and no additional sound would actually alter the musical landscape. Perhaps such alteration was only possible *vis à vis* still valid restrictions. When the late Wagner added the minor fourth to the diminished seventh chord,[12] and when Schoenberg in his *Verklärte Nacht*

12. The Tristan chord.

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used the forbidden last inversion of the ninth chord, the potential of such chords unfolded into what Webern called a sea of never heard sounds, a sea onto which *Erwartung* ventured. No sound today could so easily announce the claim of never before having been heard. If an insatiable composer were to go hunting for such a sound, he would fall victim to that powerlessness that always sets in as soon as musical material is no longer broadened by an inner compulsion but is instead ransacked in the interest of turning up new sensory stimulation. The arbitrariness of today's musical radicalism, the cheapness of being daring, is the direct result of the fact that the absolute boundary of the historical tone-space of Western music has evidently been reached; every conceivable particular tonal event is strikingly predictable and prefabricated while at the same time no strong impulse stirs to break out of the boundaries of this tone-space, nor is there any evidence of people having the ability spontaneously to hear outside of that tone-space. The efforts to achieve the total rationalization of music, however, are themselves dependent upon this boundary of listening — which is the boundary of the rationalization of music — in so far as these efforts continue to measure themselves by the idea of a space that is open and infinite and to be tamed, even though there is no longer any musical frontier. Thus the effort to rationalize music completely has something useless and frantic about it; it applies to a chaos that is no longer chaotic. It is time for a concentration of compositional energy in another direction; not towards the mere organization of material, but towards the composition of truly coherent music out of a material however shorn of every quality.

Something in the total rationalization of music seems to appeal strongly to young people. They find their own reflection in the new widespread allergy towards every kind of expression, an allergy that the iconoclastic exponents of "pointillist" music share with their conservative opponents, as with the historicist interpreters of Bach or the collectivist camp-followers of the youth-movement. Yet the implicit equation of expression with Romanticism, or with *art nouveau*, is false, and the rejection of expression simply sounds avant-garde. It is not expression as such that must be exorcised from music, like an evil demon — otherwise nothing would be left except the designs of resounding forms in motion — rather the element of transfiguration, the ideological element of expression, has grown threadbare. This ideological element is to be recognized in what fails to become substantial in the musical form, what remains ornament and empty gesture. What is

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needed is for expression to win back the density of experience, as was already tried during the Expressionist period, though without being satisfied with parading the cult of inhumanity under the guise of the cult of humanity. This touches on one of the decisive anthropological grounds for the aging of New Music: young people no longer trust in their youth. Anxiety and pain have grown to an extreme degree, and can no longer be controlled by the individual psyche. Repression becomes a necessity, and this repression, not the positiveness of some higher state of modesty and self-discipline, stands behind the idiosyncratic rejection of expression, which is itself one with suffering. Every impulse not already comprehended under collective schemata necessarily brings to mind what cannot be admitted to consciousness, and is therefore itself forbidden. Aesthetic objectivity, which flourishes on such unsteady ground, is the most extreme antagonist of the bindingness that aesthetic objectivity usurps. All the same, in the form of those works under discussion here, too much of the present state of consciousness and unconsciousness has been sedimented for these art works to be dismissed as irrelevant. But precisely the substance [*Gehalt*] of this consciousness is untruth. Many compositions of this kind give a suggestion of expression, as does any consistent work, no matter how absurd it may be. And absurdity is the direction of things. These compositions are musically meaningless in the rigorous sense of the word: their logic, construction, and inner nexus refuse any living, hearing actualization, the standard of every measure of music including that of Schoenberg. If the traditional concept of musical meaning was based on the resemblance of music to speech, and if in its explosions the revolutionary works of the New Music rebelled against meaning in order to shake off any resemblance to speech, and to actualize the usually slackly employed concept of absolute music, still the very explosions of New Music remain elements of a nexus of meaning. Even meaninglessness can become meaningful, as a contrast to and negation of meaning, just as in music the expressionless is a form of expression. But the newest musical efforts have nothing to do with this. In them meaninglessness becomes the program, though sometimes dressed up with Existentialism: in place of subjective intention, Being itself is supposed to be heard. But as a result of the abstract compositional procedures in which it originates, this music is anything but that of primal sources; it is subjectively and historically mediated to the extreme. But if this music is not the pure voice of Being, what then is the *raison d'être* of this purified music? Its schematic organization takes the place of the

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raison d'être, and the organization of material becomes a substitute for the renounced goal. As a result of the atomistic disposition of musical elements, the concept of musical coherence [*Zusammenhang*] is liquidated, a concept without which nothing like music really exists. The cult of rigid consistency terminates in idolatry; the material is no longer worked through and articulated in order to be amenable to artistic intention; instead the arrangement of the material becomes the sole artistic intention, the pallete becomes the painting. Thus, in an ominously symbolic way, the rationalization of art tips over into chaos.

The belief that through the rationalization of its materials music enters a new scientific stage is naive; it is one of those hypotheses by which artists undertake to justify, in an amateurishly intellectual way, what they have already begun to do. In the history of spirit [*Geist*], the relation between art and science is never slack, as if with progressive rationalization art would change into science and take part in its triumph. Art, and above all music, is the effort to preserve in memory and cultivate those split-off elements of truth that reality has handed over to the growing domination of nature, to scientific and technological standards that permit no exceptions. Art's effort has no place for any exalted terrain of the unconscious, no cozy little corners in the bright electrified world. Even as determinate negation, what art says is itself part of the world and subordinate to the law of enlightenment. The barbaric middle class separation of feeling from understanding is only externalized when art is set up as a nature reserve for the eternally human and of comfortable immediacy, isolated from the process of enlightenment. The authentic artists of this age, Valéry above all, have not only obeyed the technologization of the art-work, but accelerated it; the whole development of modern music, since Richard Wagner, would be unthinkable without the determined absorption of technique in the broadest sense. But the result of this, as well as of the seemingly scientific methods such as Impressionism and Pointilism imported into painting, is not that art has been transformed into science or technology. The aim of the introduction of these technical elements is not the real domination of nature, but the integral and transparent production of a nexus of meaning [*Sinnzusammenhang*]. When such transparency lets nothing glimmer through, when it is not a medium of artistic content [*Gehalt*] but an end in itself, it loses its *raison d'être*. Valéry himself emphasized this emphatically. The aesthetic rationality of the materials neither reaches their mathematical ideal nor dominates reality: it remains the mimesis of scientific procedures,

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a kind of reflex to the supremacy of science, one that casts into an even sharper light the difference of art from science the more that art shows itself to be powerless *vis à vis* the rational order of reality. Scientific art, art that would be nothing more than scientific, would be an arts and crafts analogue, no matter how rigorously it were organized. The necessity, indeed the justification, of musical construction is bound to what is to be constructed, to the composition, not to the mere fulfillment of self-posited mathematical norms, whose arbitrariness is only too easy to prove. The meaning of "technology" outside of the boundaries of the aesthetic sphere, of the sphere of play and semblance, is that of the performance of a real function: the reduction of labor. Since today as always the art-work lays claim to a sphere separate from that of practical cause-and-effect relationships, it can have nothing to do with technology in this sense, but must fulfill its own immanent order even where it participates in technique. If art forgets this, it becomes a poor third, aesthetically empty and objectively powerless, deluded hobby work. The vain hope of art, that in the disenchanted world it might save itself through pseudomorphosis into science, becomes art's nemesis. Its gesture corresponds to what is psychologically termed identification with the aggressor. The mannerisms of a machine shorn of any utility only accentuate its uselessness in the midst of universal utility, a uselessness from which art's bad conscience derives, as well as much that art credits to itself as a triumph over Romanticism. The work of Edgar Varèse bears witness to the possibility of musically mastering the experience of a technologized world without resort to arts and crafts or to a blind faith in the scientization of art. Varèse, an engineer who in fact really knows something about technology, has imported technological elements into his compositions, not in order to make them some kind of childish science, but to make room for the expression of just those kinds of tension that the aged New Music forfeits. He uses technology for effects of panic that go far beyond run of the mill musical resources.

Vain is the hope that through mathematical manipulations some pure musical thing-in-itself might come into being. One thinks that one is following the laws of nature, whereas the organizations of the material, however cosmically they gesture, are themselves already the product of human arrangements as are tempered tuning and the equality of the octave. Deluded, man sets up something artefactual as a primal phenomenon, and prays to it; an authentic instance of fetishism. This mentality has something infantile about it, for all its purity of intention. It is the passion of the empty, perhaps the gravest symptom of

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aging. Alienated and preestablished rules are blindly followed — as a good schoolboy might follow them — excluding any tension with subjectivity, without which there is as little art as truth. As certain as it is that New Music must bring the language of music and the material of music into full congruence, this congruence is not to be achieved by simply abrogating the language of music and abandoning the remains — shorn of every qualitative distinction — to their own devices, nor by simply spinning a web of schemata around this remainder instead of penetrating it. One is reminded of that popular etymology that translates "radical" as "radically empty."[13] Artistic consistency, the fulfillment of the work's own obligation — without which aesthetic seriousness is inconceivable — is not there for its own sake, but in order to present what was once called the aesthetic Idea, and what in music might be better called the composed. In music, however, that is all construction, nothing at all is composed any more. Music regresses to the pre-musical, the pre-artistic tone. Many of its adepts logically pursue *musique concrete*[14] or the electronic production of tones. But to date, electronic music has failed to fulfill its own idea; even though it theoretically disposes over the continuum of all imaginable sound colors, in actual practice — similar to the musical tin-can taste familiar from the radio, only much more extreme than that — these newly won sound colors resemble one another monotonously, whether because of their virtually chemical purity, or because every tone is stamped by the interposition of the equipment. It sounds as though Webern were being played on a Wurlitzer organ. The compulsion toward levelling and quantification seems in electronic music to be stronger than the goal of qualitative freedom and release. Of course it is quite possible that the narrowness and limitation of technological development in contemporary society bears more responsibility than does technology itself for the present state of affairs.

There is no need to fear the objection that this criticism of the situation of music is a throwback to Schoenberg, and is unable to get beyond him, Berg, and Webern, and that it will ultimately serve reactionary forces. Even within the sphere of New Music the articulation of critical thought is often sabotaged by the remark that such ideas might benefit

13. Man wird an jene Volksetymologie gemahnt, welche 'radical' mit 'ratzekahl' übersetzt (p. 160).

14. This is Pierre Schaeffer's term for the music he created in his famous laboratory, beginning in 1948. "Musique concrete," in opposition to "abstract music," music represented on paper, was constructed from recorded sounds (e. g. train and sea noises).

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the opposition. This argument secretly resembles the thought control exercised in totalitarian states. The real danger is not insights that opponents can make use of, but rather mindless apologetics that strengthen the dubious and thereby actually admit that the opposition is right. The formulaic reproach of a desired return to the twenties, after the inconvenient interruption of the Third Reich, is unquestionably grotesque. Besides one could only speak of a return if in the meantime there had been some progress. This going forward, however, was itself essentially a going backward, and musically Schoenberg's generation bequeathed innumerable tasks that remain unfulfilled. On the other hand the geological shifts that have taken place since then are such that nobody could step outside of them, no matter how earnestly he wanted to devote himself to a time that already appeared riddled with crises and yet was a paradise compared to what was to come. The reproach that the critics have not understood the most recent compositions of unchecked rationalization can hardly be maintained because such musical reasoning wants only to be demonstrated mathematically, not understood. If one asks after the function of some phenomenon within a work's total context of meaning [*Sinnzusammenhang*], the answer is a further exposition of the system. It would indeed be small comfort to imagine that, as happened in the 17th century, meaning might someday be imposed by future composers on new musical means, waiting to be conquered. It will hardly make sense today, the fusion of material and work having already been achieved, that artistic means could first be mechanically invented then later find their proper employment, anymore than this possibility could be ruled out *a priori*. Such an idea would eternalize the separation of musical language from musical materials, if not indeed from the musical subject-matter and the aesthetic aim toward which the rectification of New Music labored so hard. Musical material never comes to life independently of the substance [*Gehalt*] of the art work: except barbarically. In music, the concepts of progress and reaction should no longer be applied automatically solely to the material, which has obviously long enough been the bearer of the progress of musical meaning itself. The concept of progress loses its justification when composition turns into a mere hobby: when the subject, whose freedom is the precondition of all advanced art, is driven out; when a violent and external totality, hardly different from political totalitarianism, acquires the reins of power. The combination of technical-specialist stubbornness, which outlaws the need for expression, with a state of mind that in fact no longer even

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knows this need mirrors at best passively the fatality of the age, which this music wants to resist. It does not call this age by its name. The best this music is capable of are pieces that spring from a sometimes highly developed knowledge of what today constitutes technical necessity. In these works every measure bears witness to the concern of how music must appear if it is to be invulnerable to all imaginable objections. These are schoolpieces, paradigms. They measure themselves against an invisible canon of the permitted and the forbidden, and that alert control, which this canon certainly demands, is all that remains of composition. This music sounds as though its only origin were the fear of composing a wrong note that a schoolmate might stumble on and criticize. Musical logic becomes a caricature of logic, one that is certainly implicit in it from the start, in the rigid interdiction of anything that the system finds foreign, the latter being left to atrophy. Already in the first measure the listener senses with resignation that he has been turned over to an infernal machine, which will run its course mercilessly, until fate has completed its cycle and he can breathe again.

To be sure most of the younger twelve-tone composers are less demanding. Unfamiliar with the real accomplishments of the Schoenberg School and in possession only of the rules of twelve-tone composition, which have become apocryphal through separation from its accomplishments, these young people amuse themselves with the juggling of tone rows as a substitute for tonality, without really composing at all. This touches on a genuinely paradoxical situation: the disappearance of tradition within New Music itself. The innovators, Schoenberg, Bartok, Stravinsky, Webern, Berg, even Hindemith, were all raised on traditional music. Their idiom, their critical stance, their resistance, all crystallized around that tradition. This tradition is no longer a living part of their successors. In its place they turn what is in itself a critical musical ideal into an artificially positive one, without summoning up the spontaneity and effort that it requires. This failing can hardly be cast as a reproach. The training of composers, especially in conservatories and advanced schools of music, has remained frozen at the level of traditional tonality, and scarcely offers the student any serious technical standards by which to judge New Music. Therefore, in their search for authority, students rely on favorite and impressive models of the New Music, without being able to judge, in their own works, whether they are doing justice to the inner demands of those models, or whether they are simply imitating them externally and depending on means that once proved effective and that for this very reason are

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no longer effective. While many so-called professional musicians have not kept up, and cannot pass on what has remained foreign to them, the older tradition, tonal music, is so ragged that it only inadequately reaches today's young musicians. There is reason to suspect that those who have not mastered the new material are also unable to control the older, that they cannot compose an irreproachable, four-voice Palestrina setting, and in many cases can hardly harmonize out a chorale. The pedagogical virtues of the academy have been lost without the realm of freedom having been entered. Even music criticism hardly helps. Critics and composers only rarely meet on the same level. Most critics are even less able than the averagely educated musician to judge a demanding new score according to its inner coherence, its level of form, its individual power. Instead they fulfill their service with substitutes such as reports about their chance pleasure or displeasure in the music, or provide journalistic information. The critic more or less routinely brings forth everything possible about the impression a work makes, its history, style, and author without carrying out what the name of his profession demands: critique, making a judgment, debatable though that judgment might be. Many derive their criteria from the limits of their own understanding and denounce everything opaque to them as intellectual and abstract, music for the drawing board, not for the ear. Others, whose eduction is more historical than practical, draw their standards from this history and content themselves with reminiscences, or with cliches drawn from folk or youth movements, embracing the norm of community for community's sake in spite of the fact that contemporary society militates against collectively confirmed music. Recently, many critics have overcompensated for their lack of musical comprehension: in order not to miss the birth of a new genius, they indiscriminately praise everything that could perhaps be important. This only contributes to the general disorientation and helps produce a culture of musical mish-mash. The detestable ideal of a moderate modernism gains currency, fostering on both sides problematic compromise-solutions between tradition and the new. The new musical material, emptied of its sense, is transformed into deadening stimuli by its endless repetition. Scarcely felt is the obligation of achieving that uniqueness of the work, that unrepeatableness enjoined on musical composition by the emancipation of music from all pre-established form. Most composers, who do not swear by exactitude, are content to produce further examples of various types of compositions established by composers such as Bartok, Stravinsky, and

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Hindemith, without recognizing that these types do not define a space inside of which one can move with pre-established assurance, and that what matters is exclusively the production of new types, or rather new characters. On the other hand this disorganization of the new musical means has disorganized the traditional ones. A virtue has been made out of this disorganization in the form of a sort of all-purpose musical language, in which quasi-literary effects, in particular a thoroughly baseless and cheap irony, claim first place. Pseudo-intellectuality and cultural-political knowledgeability replace genuine artistic realization. Music that strikes up the pose of a tradition that is no longer substantive and even technically no longer present, has no advantage over the techniques of the tone-row engineers. Such music is simply making things a little more comfortable for itself and its followers.

All of these inner-aesthetic tendencies accord precisely with those of society as a whole, although the mediation between the two realms is not at every point transparent. Society not only influences artists externally, not only supervises them — although there is enough of that — it also brings forth the individuals and forms of objective spirit [*Geist*] that are the artist's own essence.[15] As if objectivity were the result of a kind of subtraction, the exclusion of an ornament, and were nothing other than a residue, it is supposed that through an absence of subjectivity one would be empowered with an objectivly binding force, the destruction of which is blamed on the preponderance of a subjectiveness that in fact no longer exists. Yet all aesthetic objectivity is mediated by the power of the subject, which brings an object [*Sache*] entirely to itself. Objectivism, which is so vain about its lack of vanity, and so facilely considers itself morally superior, self-righteously puts a premium on the deficiencies of its exponents. It thrives on the tempting ideology that one need only capitulate to the overpowering, senseless force of existence, in order to share in an authenticated cosmos. But the overcoming of a non-existent self is an all too comfortable course, as is evident in what today's alleged asceticism is bringing to maturity. The symptoms of the aging of the New Music are in social terms those of the contraction of freedom, the collapse of individuality that helpless and disintegrated individuals confirm, approve, and do once again to themselves. In this there is a fatal resemblance between the radicals — who turn themselves over to what they mistakenly consider the inner

15. . . . Wesen oder Unwesen. . . (p. 135). This phrase cannot be properly translated, though ". . . order or disorder," does catch one corner of the thought within the bounds of its rhetoric.

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law of the material, and who enthusiastically subtract themselves from the picture — and those who have crawled away into the ruins of a bygone tradition, or who trump up a supra-individually sanctioned aesthetic realm that in fact merely corresponds to the ideal of weakened and anxious individuals. Nobody really takes a chance any more; all are looking for shelter. The brutal measures taken by the totalitarian states, measures that over-control music and attack all deviation as decadent and subversive, give tangible evidence of what happens less visibly in non-totalitarian countries, of what transpires, indeed, in the interior of art as well as within most human beings. In the face of such profound damage, nothing would be more foolish than to moralize. The primitive fact of the matter cannot be kept silent, that today the alienation between music and the public has so rebounded against music that the material existence of serious musicians is seriously threatened. They are compelled to produce compromised compositions that, given the inescapable necessity of the very same alienation, must themselves turn out powerless and false. The daily existence of Webern and Berg was precarious even in their own time. They only got by thanks to the economic backwardness of their homeland, which in many ways was still pre-capitalist and offered loopholes for activities that had no exchange-value. Berg passed the last years of his life in material need, after the possibility of performances in Germany had been cut off. Anyone unwilling to volatilize comfortably the aging of the New Music as a chapter in cultural history must think it together with the real suffering of men, not the least of whose terror — as Theodor Haecker put it — is that they are no longer even permitted to articulate their condition. Today, artists like Berg or Webern would hardly be able to make it through the winter. If there were such artists, they would either have to play along and in some way or other learn to toe the line, or at least become the leader of a deluded group of disciples and thus in protest against collectivization become the hostages to a second and scarcely less dubious collectivization.

The current paralysis of musical forces represents the paralysis of all free initiative in this over-managed world, which will not tolerate anything that would remain outside of it or at least not be integrated as an element of opposition. All this must be brought unsparingly to consciousness, for the sake of the possibility of something better. Whether it will do any good is highly questionable; for the foundation of music, as of every art, the very possibility of taking the aesthetic seriously, has been deeply shaken. Since the European catastrophe culture hangs on

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like houses in the cities accidentally spared by bombs or indifferently patched together. Nobody really believes in "culture" any more, the backbone of spirit [*Geist*] has been broken, and anyone who pays no attention to this and acts as though nothing had happened, must crawl like an insect, not walk upright. The only authentic art works produced today are those that in their inner organization measure themselves by the fullest experience of horror and there is scarcely anyone, except Schoenberg or Picasso, who can depend on himself to have the power to do this. Even so, the earnestness that would rather renounce art than put it in the service of a debased contemporary reality may itself be only a disguised form of adaptation to an already universal attitude of a praxis: submission to a praxis that aspires to the given without in any way going beyond it. Though today all art has and must have a bad conscience to the extent that it does not make itself stupid, nevertheless its abolishment would be false in a world in which what dominates needs art as its corrective: the contradiction between what is and the true, between the management of life and humanity. The possibility of winning back the power of artistic resistance depends on not shrinking from the fact that what is objectively, socially required is now preserved exclusively in hopeless isolation. Only one who was prepared to work in isolation, to support himself by no delusive laws and necessities, would perhaps be granted something more than mirroring the helplessly solitary.

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Notes and Commentary:

Hidden Agendas: The Young Heidegger and the Post-Modern Debate

Russell A. Berman and Paul Piccone

After having had to endure endless debates about the alleged virtues of the "young" Marx, Lukács, Gramsci or Willie Mays as opposed to the codified rendition of their "mature" counterparts, the immediate reaction can only be one of annoyance. After all, what these generational contrapositions seek to achieve by vindicating the "young" prototype is either to criticize the "old," often senile version, or seek justification for unorthodox new interpretations of otherwise already well-established ideas. Nothing of the sort is intended here with the publication of Heidegger's letter to Husserl's daughter — a letter which, if it were seriously meant to be of the "love" or "come on" variety, suffers from all the hermeneutical nightmares Heidegger's work usually generates. Aside from the normal pomposity and pedantry typical of all of Heidegger's works, however, it reveals a philosophical outlook and attitude towards life that found full expression in the next two decades in *Being and Time* as well as in the adherence to National Socialism — an adherence never explicitly repudiated.

This seemingly irrelevant biographical detail of Heidegger's life takes on otherwise unwarranted significance in light of the recent "Heidegger debate" which, like all such faddish events in the Parisian cultural scene, conceals deeper unresolved socio-political pathologies. That Heidegger was a faithful card-carrying Nazi is no news to anyone minimally familiar with recent European intellectual history. That he really believed what Nazism stood for is also not exactly a revelation. So why all the fuss? What is the hidden agenda? How is it that this seemingly trivial belaboring of the obvious could become such a *cause célèbre* to engage leading European intellectuals and spread through the cultural pages of all remaining high brow sectors of the press?

The answer to these question must be sought in the broader trajectory of recent European political philosophy. The total collapse of the Left as a result of the socio-economic disintegration of "really existing socialism" following the

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Polish events or, even earlier, with the rise of the *Nouvelle Philosophie* in the wake of Solzhenitsyn's belated revelations about the Gulag — culminating with that unconditional ideological surrender represented by *perestroika* and *glasnost* — have finally shocked guilt-ridden European intellectuals (and, to a lesser extent, even their radical American counterparts) away from any residual orthodox Marxism, back into the folds of the previously much-despised and discredited liberalism or, to a lesser extent, into a more fashionable post-modernism. Far from landing within an hospitable ideological abode, however, these freshly repentant ex-Marxists who opted for warmed-over liberalism found themselves besieged on the Right by a post-modernism which, surprisingly, had already successfully undermined the very possibility of the kind of normative liberalism-by-default they sought to recycle.

What post-modernism had done, while radical intellectuals were wasting their time either apologizing for indefensible Soviet policies (and proxies) or trying to locate emancipatory substrata where there were none, was to popularize the implications of the impossibility of what had pretentiously come to be known as "foundational discourse," i.e., theological or secularized attempts to *validate normative structures transcendentally*. Of course, that "God is dead" was announced loudly enough by Nietzsche almost a century earlier, and the late Husserl's project to re-ground the "European sciences" on rigorous and normative phenomenological foundations was already a tentative answer to this generalized nihilism. The recent post-modernist contribution is a spectacular PR maneuver: it suceeded in repackaging and marketing — especially in English Departments all too well-known for intellectual underdevelopment — what had been previously bemoaned as ontological *Angst* into *playfulness* and *joy*: transcendental homelessness for the me-generation. The problem with this irresponsible scatter-brainedness, of course, is multifold: despite its own radical self-description, it has been quickly integrated as a new version of hegemonic conformism, while its celebration of foundationlessness has often been an excuse for inconsistency and sloppiness, now renamed "paralogy." From the standpoint of the neo-liberals, however, post-modernism appeared to rule out the possibility of doing "serious politics" any longer, thus unintentionally rendering obsolete armies of self-righteous New Class intellectuals previously employed profitably in operationalizing predominant ideologies into institutional forms.

Post-modernism had to be defeated, but the new-found defenders of rationality (eagerly repressing their radical past) found themselves strikingly unprepared to meet this challenge. All they could come up with were, at best, communication theories postulating ideal speech situations which were to result miraculously in friendly conflict resolutions within a Panglossian world of permanent universal consensus. This eclectic mishmash of British analytic philosophy, American functionalism, French Enlightenment and a German accent was not particularly convincing. Despite its attractive promise of a post-conventional identity, it generated a *de facto* conventionalism. More importantly, post-modern

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conservatives could all too easily dismiss it as just one more narrative, terminally implicated with Western metaphysics. Did not consensus theory make the anachronistic assumption that "subjects" speak and, even more ridiculous, that they might understand each other? Something more powerful was needed.

But where philosophical arguments failed, political innuendos seemed to succeed. By emphasizing the undeniable derivation of post-modernism and its flashier model, "deconstruction," from Heidegger, and then attacking the latter philosophy as intrinsically Nazi, it seemed possible to discredit the whole tradition as politically dangerous, thus indirectly relegitimating the old conformist and ungroundable — but in the end much more politically digestable — liberal ideology. Thus, aging 68ers and the like could comfortably pursue their policy of ideological *détente* with the power structure, look forward to generous pensions, and pretend to retain intellectual integrity at the same time. The demonization of Heidegger promised to become an ideological stroke of genius. This at least partly explains the success of the informative but derivative and unoriginal book by Victor Farias on *Heidegger et Le Nazisme*, which became the declaration of a war now being fought not only in the East with the Germans, but on the Western front too against the so-called Yale school in terms of the "Paul de Man case."

If the attack on post-modern Heideggerianism was driven by the political vicissitudes of ex-leftists rushing back to the center of bourgeois modernity, so too did the post-modern response depend on an equally sentimental education. Here too the radicalism of some erstwhile 68ers was displaced: not into the conformist category of consensus but into the equally conformist category of autonomous aesthetics. That is, the debate between the two camps is in fact a debate between two models of recuperation, each of which is characterized by a retreat to extraordinarily standard Kantian positions: on the one hand, the categorical imperative; on the other, the beautiful and the sublime. The post-modernist long march that carried the revolution out of the streets and into the closets of literature departments and literary texts provided a lucrative career path in some academic fields, while holding onto tenuous alibis about radical ruptures, subversiveness, and alterity. Therefore, what embarrassed the post-modernists in the Heidegger discussion was less the so-called revelations about the master's political past than the self-evident fact that the self-proclaimed aesthetic radicals had become totally unable to discuss any politics or history. Nor did they want to. To sustain the phantasy that deconstruction somehow represents a viable political project, one must now truly give "all power to the imagination."

Unfortunately, notwithstanding all that has been written so far on the subject, one essential element in this liberal offensive remains unproven — an element which threatens to render the whole strategy meaningless: the *necessary* connection between Heidegger's Nazi politics, his philosophy and, *ipso facto*, postmodernism and deconstruction. No convincing case has yet been made in support of this connection and, on closer scrutiny, no case can be made.

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Far from being in any meaningful sense *necessary*, this connection is highly *contingent*. Consequently, it cannot succeed in discrediting a post-modernism which must be fought and defeated on more intellectually honest grounds. Yet equally vacuous and intellectually dishonest are the self-righteous claims from the camp of Heidegger apologists that philosophy has nothing to do with biography or history. Today it is difficult to defend this anachronism of a thoroughly autonomous and disinterested realm of culture. The readiness with which sophisticated critics have regressed to this retrograde claim is particularly ironic, since it indicates a thorough disregard for any effort to consider the context of cultural texts, including precisely Heidegger's insistence on historicity. Heidegger may have to be protected from his defenders.

Thus, on the one hand, the broad-brush identification of cultural material with a particular political practice: shall we then blithely equate Bloch with Stalin or Foucault with Khomeini or, for that matter (it is the same crude gesture) Jane Fonda with Vietnam? On the other hand, sophistic arguments about the irrelevance of politics-back-then as a justification for the irresponsibility of academics now: Derrida's defense of Heidegger and Hartman's apology for de Man turn out to be argumentatively indistinguishable from the works of the revisionist German historians. Instead of the liberal reduction of culture to history (hardly even a genuinely liberal position) and instead of the post-modern conservative insistence on a pristine separation, it seems more reasonable to have it both ways: to consider philosophical texts (or works of art) in terms of their own autonomy, without pretending that society and politics have disappeared into a simulacral economy. Adorno described this as an oscillation between immanent and transcendent criticism. To expect these two perspectives to form a whole would imply a thoroughly naive stance toward the possibilities of cultural criticism in contemporary society. It is for this reason that the following letter by the young Heidegger is translated here. Serious correspondence, the way it was carried out before the advent of the telephone, successfully bridged — especially in the case of Heidegger — biographical and philosophical levels, thus providing almost privileged evidence for any claims concerning the relation between the two.

In 1913 Heidegger completed his doctoral thesis in philosophy at the University of Freiburg. Entitled "The Doctrine of Judgment in Psychologism," it drew in part on his recent reading of Husserl's *Logical Investigations*. Some two years later, he received his *venia legendi*, becoming a *Privatdozent* with a habilitation on Duns Scotus and was soon invited to offer philosophy courses within the Faculty of Theology. Farias speculates that this invitation was due, in part, to long standing ties to conservative Catholic circles. Of particular interest, however, is the gradual shift from theology to philosophy, which is the context of the letter to Elli Husserl.

Given his connections and his interests, Heidegger might have expected to have been promoted to professor of theology in 1917. He lost out to a competitor, Joseph Geyser. This outcome may have had to do with the contemporary

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controversy within the Church set off by the claims of the so-called "modernists," who called into question the priority of systematized theology and clerical structures over a natural experience of religion (a conflict reminiscent of the debate within Wilhelmine Protestantism between Harnack and Sohm and the latter's advocacy of an anti-institutional "charismatic" option). Pius X attacked modernism in 1907 in the encyclical, *Pacendi dominici gregis*, and in 1910 prescribed an unambiguous antimodernist stance in theological faculties. It is plausible that the Freiburg faculty and the Archbishop decided against Heidegger, identified as sympathetic to the heterodox position. In any case it is certain that the decision contributed to Heidegger's gradual estrangement from the Church (he married the Protestant daughter of any army officer in 1917) and the reorientation of his academic career plans toward philosophy.

This turn to philosophy became explicit, at the latest, in January 1919 when, as Farias reports, Heidegger wrote to Engelbert Krebs and described how systematic Catholicism had lost its meaning for him, but by no means Christianity in general, which he claims to understand "better perhaps than the official interpreters." So at this point, Heidegger has a double agenda: to establish himself as a presence among professional philosophers while, at the same time, elaborating a non-ecclesiastical theology (that would presumably include an attack on the systematization of religious experience). Both of these elements are crucial for the understanding of the letter.

Heidegger wrote the letter during the Easter vacation in 1919, just before the beginning of the new semester. Husserl had arrived in Freiburg in 1916 (replacing Rickert, who had left for Heidelberg), but now, three years later, he was about to become dean and therefore likely to exercise considerable influence over the future composition of the philosphy department. With his *billet-doux* to the dean's daughter, the ambitious *Privatdozent*, dissatisfied with his current position, is attempting, in a rather transparent manner, to ingratiate himself with the philosophical power structure within the university. Hence his self-promotion and embarrassing praise of his own qualities, his "intellectual cunning and philosophical precision"; hence, too, his arrogant contempt of colleagues and students, in order to heighten his own auratic worth; and finally, the intimate tones and amorous innuendoes, as if he were courting the addressee — evidently not the last case of institutional opportunism in Heidegger's career at Freiburg.

At the same time, he is settling scores with the theological establishment and setting a course for a philosophizing that would represent an extension of some his own religious concerns. Obviously, institutional theology is one of the objects of his attack on the "bad conceptuality" of the 19th century, with its perpetual "theoretical contemplation" and "reflection," to which Heidegger contraposes "historical living." The substance of this living does not become clear until the tone of the letter shifts into what Weber might describe as *pianissimo* and Heidegger exhorts Elli "to be able to wait again and to have faith in grace that lies in every authentic life." That is to say, that the alternative to

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theology, which is clearly a cipher for established bourgeois culture, the Enlightenment and, in current parlance, Western metaphysics, implies a renunciation of categories, concepts, programs, aesthetics, etc., and a return to "God and the originary force of the deed. . . ."

Evidently the young Heidegger is articulating a philosophical paradigm that remains central for much of his subsequent thinking. This is, of course, not to deny later elaborations, but the clarity of the project at this historical moment makes the letter a remarkable document. The historical moment of 1919 is not only a matter of Heidegger's career plans or his struggle with the Church; it is also a turning point in German history, the end of the war, the revolution, the establishment of the republic, and it is useful to consider the letter in this light.

Like Weber in "Science as a Vocation," Heidegger is registering the crisis of bourgeois culture at the end of the empire. Unlike Weber, however, he apparently has little interest in preserving any legacy of 19th century liberalism. Yet this seemingly radical stance is articulated with no reference at all to the upheavals shaking German society, i.e., the critique of established culture is presented as a result of his own heroic isolation and not as the consequence of any external experience. Indeed, despite the political storms of 1918-1919, Heidegger wants to claim that "the 19th century is not recognized as something still to overcome," as if the Weimar Republic were solely the unchanged continuation of the Bismarckian *Reich.*

But this is not political innocence; on the contrary, it indicates a profound contempt for the contemporary social transformations, while insisting on the necessity of a more genuinely radical revolution that is thereby deferred to a later date: 1933. Therefore Heidegger proceeds in a systematic manner in the letter to attack three prevailing modes of bourgeois sociability. University science, heir to the enlightenment, is denounced as a solely classificatory project that can only vivisect life but never experience it. (In the light of this vitalism, Heidegger in 1919 was clearly related to the irrationalists that Weber warned against.) Meanwhile, the young generation is declared to be epigonic, i.e., it only offers more of the same, despite its self-understanding as spontaneous or emotive; in the end, it repeats the pedantry of the Wilhelmine world, turning everything into a topic for "discussion" or "lecturing." Finally the proper world of the *Bildungsbürgertum*, that "higher spiritual sociability," is also just so much more verborrhea, the compulsive chatter of the salon, that Carl Schmitt, borrowing from Donoso Cortes, denounces as "*una classa discutidora*," always talking but never getting to the point of decision or resolution.

The critique of science is perhaps the most interesting feature, and directly anticipates aspects of post-modern epistemology and the critique of logocentrism. Unfortunately, Heidegger's analysis of the tyranny of the concept, which forms the basis for his critique of technology, is considerably weaker than many other accounts, from the young Marx's critique of alienation through Husserl's *Crisis of the European Sciences* to Adorno and Horkheimer on

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the Enlightenment. The most valid comparison, however, would be to the treatment of law and second nature in the nearly contemporary *Theory of the Novel*, in which Lukács relates the structures of reification to general cultural structures in alienated society. That is, where Lukács treats the production of a scientistic vision as part of a general social constitution (which, in *History and Class Consciousness*, turns out to have to do with the character of capitalism), for Heidegger it is solely a matter of university practices. Consequently, the critique of science does not lead Heidegger, barely half a year after the armistice, to comment on the role of technology in the war: his putative radicalism, like that of his deconstructive heirs, includes the "grand refusal" to criticize really-existing imperialism, a refusal which is both contingent and opportunist as well as "theoretical" and consistent with the dissolution of binary opposites and, therefore, of any critical potential. As Heidegger puts it: "Heightens or hinders, shapes or distorts, agitates or silences" — the opposites are always the same, and such distinctions are regarded as just so much pedantry. Does it follow, then, that war is peace and slavery is freedom? In order to defend Heidegger, Derrida — in a Heideggerian move — draws attention to the similarities between Nazism and Anti-Nazism. Yet they have only become indistinguishable owing to a philosophical refusal to make distinctions.

The limits of Heidegger's account become even clearer if one examines closely the alternative he proposes to the bad sociability he rejects. "Only life overcomes life — not objects or things — not even logical 'values' and 'norms' " — the meaninglessness of both objective entities and cultural material appears to be irredeemable, and it is only in the third level, the realm of life, that genuine existence is possible: only the deed counts, no matter what it is, as long as it is done. That is, as early as 1919, Heidegger's project is marked, on the one hand, by a promise of a radical revolution or return (or revolution as return) while asserting the necessarily devalued character of two other dimensions of human activity: technical labor and cultural thought. This heroic embrace of a bad life, when stripped of the stylistic embellishments and unctuous gestures, turns out to be the conventionalist imperative to accept the given as given, i.e., the indisputable point of departure of the letter, the Being of living which Heidegger wants to shield from any critical-theoretical scrutiny. And it is at this level that an affinity with the rhetoric of National Socialism might begin to be pursued: a promise of a radical return side-by-side with a practice of bureaucratic administration, utopian gestures and enforced conformism.

Heidegger's alternative to bad science is not only vitalist life but rather a life staged in an agonistic scene: "Only life overcomes life." The imagery of struggle is in itself not unique; Heraclitus comes to mind, as do Hobbes, Hegel, Marx and Nietzsche. More interesting is to note the specifically privatized character of the struggle in Heidegger, presented in the letter as part and parcel of the imagined seduction. This is neither civil strife nor the master-slave dialectic but a construction of intimacy characterized, of course, by one participant overcoming the other, who is called upon to stop talking, to be humble, and

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to wait quietly for "the original swelling of a growing formation": shut up and have faith. The legerdemain becomes breath-taking in the final paragraph when the presumably equal exchange implied by the "flowing of our historical life-wholes" is elided immediately into the asymetrical subordination of Elli to Heidegger's life. The nature of the struggle, which is to replace bourgeois norms, therefore includes simultaneous figures of superiority and inferiority, command and obedience; in other words, at this very early date, the Heideggerian project allows for both *Entschlossenheit* and *Gelassenheit* at the same time, which indicates the untenability of the attempts by Derrida and Lacoue-Labarthe to save a late, post-subjective Heidegger by abandoning an early Heidegger still tied to metaphysics and *therefore* susceptible to Nazism. On the contrary, one consequence of the letter to Elli Husserl, and certainly not the least important one, is the recognition that the young Heidegger is already the old Heidegger.

But, when all is said and done, this whole Heidegger debate seems hopelessly beside the point on all but the most scholastic and pedantic points. As a pathetic modernist attempt to return to its philosophical youth by exorcising its post-modern senile outcome, the liberal attack only reveals the theoretical exhaustion of a perspective which has now been running on fumes for the best part of this century. As the excuse for a post-modernist response in the form of an intensification of the initial critique, the apologetic replies only confirm widespread suspicions concerning the conformist, defeatist, superficial and irresponsible nature of this peculiar intellectual fashion. This becomes most clear in Baudrillard's contribution to the Heidegger debate,[1] which drives to its extreme conclusions the worsts aspects of post-modernism.

Painfully aware of the exhaustion of the main intellectual driving forces of the 20th century, Baudrillard does not even try to meet the challenge of renewal or reform. Extending the critique of the culture industry *ad absurdum*, he sees reality as hopelessly mediated beyond intelligibility by the mass-media. But is not all knowledge but the most trivial (Hegel's *sinnliche Gewißheit*) necessarily mediated? Do the mass-media really constitute a qualitatively new mode of mediation? Does Baudrillard's TV set come without an on/off switch? Is not the appropriation of all knowledge and information predicated on an inescapably subjective appropriation and contextualization within necessarily highly idiosyncratic biographies? Baudrillard's "spectacular" epistemological insight generates the paradoxical predicament that the more the media elaborates the past, the less we can understand it, to the point of ruling out the very possibility of historical judgment. How does he cut through this post-modern Gordian knot? By calling for a premature closure of this sad century of horrors. Our continuing obsession with these horrors and their logic he

1. Jean Baudrillard, "Nécrospective antour de Martin Heidegger," in *Libération* (January 27, 1988). An English translation of this piece has appeared in English as "Hunting Nazis and losing Reality," in *New Statesman* (February 19, 1988), pp. 16-17.

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sees as another way to extend them to the present, thus preventing us from coming to terms with them as "the past."

Once a social pathology, amnesia returns as post-modern bliss. Skipping the 1990s to the 21st century, as Baudrillard jokingly suggests, would presumably allow us to regain that reality whose loss constitutes today's demise. But how does one move away from this presumed mythical stage ushered in by a culture industry gone wild, today or in the 21st century? Is it really possible to package the past as a series of self-contained commodified events, finished and done with, thus susceptible to historical judgment? Has all history ceased to be *contemporary* history, and thus an inextricable extension of the present? Fragmented into a myriad of equally fraudulent narratives, these mythological histories turn out to be all equally artificial and therefore irrelevant in a world where, as a result, *Realpolitik* reasserts itself by default.

So we have come full circle. Where Heidegger wanted to abolish — 20 years too late — the 19th century, Baudrillard similarly proposes to abolish the 20th century —over a decade too early. Those, however, who want to abolish the previous century without first understanding it, are bound to recreate it as the next — only worse. In the same way that the Third Reich ended up as a catastrophic regression from Weimar, mythological narratives end up relegitimating even the most backward historical accounts. Once again, the road to conformism is paved with hyper-radical rhetoric all too susceptible to capitulation to the given, be that Nazism, communism or a simulacral consumer society. As a mirror of the reproduction of more of the same, Baudrillard's text returns to the point where Heidegger's letter to Elli begins: all we can say about "historical living" is that it *is*. For Baudrillard, it is myth; it only *seems*, and it comes in video cassettes.

*Heidegger's Letter to the Boss' Daughter**

Konstanz, April 24, 1919

Dear Fräulein Husserl,

I often think of our discussion about historical consciousness. Whether our forming life truly lives its historical living — it itself *is*, and everything depends on that. But not on the theoretical contemplation of this possibility and not on the reflection *on it*. The 19th century with its bad conceptuality and the ineradicable addiction, which became a "life-form," to touch and handle all and

* Originally published in *Aut-Aut* 223-24 (January-April, 1988), pp. 6-11.

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everything with a general and particular scientific manner but with an intellectuality that was nevertheless still structured by accident — that 19th century is neither recognized as something still to overcome nor is it experienced from an original center. The unbridled, basically enlightenment directive to nail life and everything living onto a board, like things, orderly and flat, so that everything becomes overseeable, controllable, definable, connectable, and explicable, where only many pure and unrestrained (*sit venia verbo*) — "ables" exist — this directive underlies all the many quasi-memories of life, which are being attempted today in every sphere of experience.

And, by God, it is not difficult, if gifted with a certain intellectual cunning and philosophical precision, to make "new" contributions to "scholarship" and to show that, in the beginning, there were no turtles in the turtle pond — scholarly garbage which one can occasionally (if at all) bury in a hidden footnote — but instead "scholarly conferences" are filled up with this stuff. And it is even easier, when the necessary nonsense is available and the ever-ready warmed-over impulsive outpourings can be given, to use contents borrowed from readings and vicarious feelings and the objectified experiences [*Gelebtheiten*] of others in order to stimulate others and to lead them on and to dazzle.

And, in this we are so lamentably epigonic. The irreverence in contemporary being, the nearly spontaneous discussion of the crucial issues of one's inner life, the typical, immediate lecturing about everything accidental [*Zu-fällige*], — this all prevents originality and authenticity.

And that strong form of higher spiritual sociability that grows without restraint or program and shakes up one's own life? To be allowed to participate and to be "taken seriously," one must constantly be on guard against oneself, for example, that one does not catch oneself spending a whole evening without saying a word — for something must be said, no matter what the cost, and we must have something to say about everything. Nothing can be left unspoken — and by no one — everything must be talked-to-bits (*zer-redet*) — so that one can then part with chopped-up "themes" and, "highly satisfied," look forward to the next time.

Today one even experiences how students send a post-card to inquire how far one has thought through the problems, what has been turned up, what result one has in stock and when the new message will arrive and if one could not perhaps learn about it immediately. An unrestrained intrusiveness, feeling up everything, which neither knows nor experiences the struggles of a spiritual life that has turned away from the hustle-bustle and the market-place.

Let us therefore leave all organizing of togetherness and rapprochement of the high and inward-turned spiritual sociability and friendship.

We must be able to wait again and to have faith in grace that lies in every authentic life, that knows humility before the intangibility of experience, be it of others or one's own. From an expansiveness in a plurality of objects, our life must return to the original swelling of a growing formation. No shattering of life into programs, no aestheticizing cosmetics, no ingenious gestures, but the

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strong trust in the bond to God and the originary force of the deed, with its pure consequences. Only life overcomes life — not objects or things — not even logical "values" and "norms" — but, again, only life, that of the most intimate "thou" and that of the accompanying "other" which somehow vitally enters one's own life, heightens or hinders, shapes or distorts, agitates or silences one's own life.

If you should look for a cause or occassion for this letter, you will find none. Listening for a motive, you will hear the flowing of our historical life-wholes, my own which you yourself have entered.

Most affectionately yours,

Martin Heidegger

*The Political Economy of Colorization: Reel Rehab?**

Tim Luke

The political economy of Reaganism has destabilized the competitive sector of American business extensively over the past decade. Beset by a fluctuating dollar, mature domestic markets, and more innovative foreign competitors, corporate capital increasingly has turned "paper entrepreneurialism" during the 1980s into the nation's newest growth industry. Rather than creating new goods and services, more and more firms are spending millions to take over existing producers of available goods and services. The cultural consequences of these parasitic practices are proving highly destructive in many of America's industries from coast to coast.

The entertainment industry is no exception to this trend as the sale of MGM's film library to Turner Entertainment illustrates.[1] Buying old movies, like taking over existing oil reserves or standing factories, is cheaper and much more

* An earlier version of this essay has appeared in *Art Papers*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (March/April, 1987), pp. 70-72.

1. *The Los Angeles Times*, October 23, 1986, pp. VI-1.

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profitable than investing in the manufacture of new films. From an aesthetic perspective that mistakenly still clings to old myths about art's autonomy, an entire canon of art has been sacrificed at a corporate yardsale, auctioned off to an asset shuffler who will use these classic films to sell more beer, toilet paper, and term life insurance on his struggling cable television network. This block trading of cinemagraphic images by the culture industry, however, is also a fragment, revealing a much larger whole — the inner workings of an entirely new political economy tied to the production and consumption of information.[2]

Film and Computer Colorization

Some movie directors still regard their films as unique "works of art." While this claim might hold true for a few experimental or craft productions, most movie makers still must pitch their products of their art to some sort of commercial audience. Once directors cross into this terrain, which is controlled by various sectors of the culture industry, any studio executive can tell you that such films are really nothing but "a property," pure and simple. Of course, Adorno has claimed that the essence of art is twofold: "On the one hand, it dissociates itself from empirical reality and from the functional complex that is society; and on the other, it belongs to that reality and to that social complex."[3] Given its entrapment in the entertainment cycles of the culture industry, however, the art of film always has had a tough time dissociating itself from the economic and political realities of contemporary society.

These tensions have racked the arts for a long time. Whether the artistic product was given over to an aristocratic patron or sold into the gallery system of modern art markets, art always has been, in some respect, "a business." Yet, no other modern art form is enmeshed so completely within the logic of corporate marketing, expert planning, and major investment management as is cinema. Producing a movie requires collective modes of aesthetic expression and production, involving the work of many different trades and talents. To succeed, the scale of such art necessarily requires big money. And, despite the romantic illusions of film *auteurs* or individual movie-goers, the logic of commodity exchange essentially remains the central sub-text in any cinemagraphic production.

No other single event, however, has revealed this logic of commodification in film as clearly as the furor over "computer colorizing" old black-and-white masterpieces from the film libraries of MGM, Warner Brothers, or RKO. After purchasing nearly 3,700 titles from MGM for over $1.2 billion in 1986, Ted Turner announced plans for color-tinting over 100 movie classics at Color Systems Technology, Inc., of Marina del Ray, California to broadcast on his Turner Broadcasting Systems television network and release as video cassettes. In

2. See Timothy W. Luke, *Screens of Power: Ideology, Domination and Resistance in Informational Society* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, forthcoming 1989).

3. T. W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, trans. C. Lenhardt, ed. Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), p. 358.

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addition to Turner's project, Hal Roach Studios and its subsidiary, Colorization, Inc., of Toronto, as well as Walt Disney Studios now have programs underway for colorizing black-and-white films.[4]

For Turner, his old MGM films are still promising commodities. Unfortunately, however, they also are "run-down," having lost some of their entertainment value due to the changing tastes of the viewing public. After decades of color television broadcasting, the benchmark of popular taste for film reception now is set in color videotape rather than black-and-white still photography, as it was during the 1930s. Hal Roach Studios, for example, justifies its colorizing activities by citing public opinion surveys that indicate 85% of all television viewers will watch *only* color programming. Turner argues that these films must be colorized to pull a decent share across all major media markets. Computerized color-tinting simply revalorizes otherwise depreciating corporate assets. Color enlarges the audience that broadcasters sell to advertisers and increases the circulation of products that advertisers try selling to the audience.

In October 1986, Turner bluntly stated his position: "The last time I checked, I owned the films that we're in the process of colorizing." As the owner of such art properties, then, he claimed exclusive rights of control, including renovation through color recoding. "I can do whatever I want with them," he said, "and if they're going to be shown on television, they're going to be in color."[5] Turner's thinking is simple. He is in the business of electronically packaging and delivering audiences to corporate advertisers. His media conglomerate now has legal title to these film commodities, which currently have immense value to his firm as the movie time-slot filler to be wrapped around paid commercial advertising. If color-tinting increases his network's audience and his advertisers' share in the media markets, then the value of his commercial broadcast and cable time also increases. Likewise, in the non-broadcast/non-cable markets, VCR owners are more likely to purchase as well as pay more for a colorized black and white film cassette than an original, which also increases such films' value as mass marketable goods.

The Logic of "Reel Rehab"

Turner's colorization strategies parallel the process of urban gentrification. The classic film, seen as "a property," possesses much less exchange-value in its original mode of black-and-white presentation. Such films now are a collective image stock, like an urban housing stock, which has become run-down through its constant overexposure to consumers who simply expect and prefer color images. In other words, on today's mediascapes, viewers by-pass black-and-white properties, like "Casablanca," "Grand Hotel," "Coconuts," or "The Grapes of Wrath," as they flock into more attractive color properties, ranging from *Hogan's Heroes* re-runs, to Voltron cartoons, to the *Wheel of Fortune*.

4. *The Los Angeles Times*, October 23, 1986, p. VI-1.
5. *The Los Angeles Times*, October 23, 1986, p. VI-1.

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Older properties, of course, still have their old-time craftsmanship and elegant charm, but they mainly crop up in less attractive, low-viewing time slots rather than in prime-time. They are "red-lined" in such low-rent niches because they lack the essential feature that today's consumers demand with a flick of their wireless remotes — color. So Turner has launched the initial waves of image rehabilitation to gentrify these decayed sections in the mediascape. Like old railway stations, Victorian mansions, or closed-down mill buildings, black-and-white film images can be rehabed as another part of America's "usable past" by using imagination, high technology and lots of cash. To attract the right demographic mix back into these televisual neighborhoods, a great deal of technical talent and financial capital are invested in aging film properties to redevelop their otherwise sound structural foundations. Once renovated, they again become attractive, full-color alternatives for prime-time viewing rather than circulating in blighted late night, weekend afternoon or early morning time slots. Like gentrification, the colorization project boils down to money — increasing the share of viewers in more movie time-slots, and, by extension, the earning power of these film properties from advertising.

So far, computer colorization has focused on movies with a special iconic significance in American social rituals, like the commercial cult of Christmas or the patriotic spectacles of Independence Day. During the 1985 holiday season, Color Systems Technology, Inc., heavily promoted and then broadcast a computer colorized print of the Christmas classic, "Miracle on 34th Street." With the transformation of Kris Kringle, Natalie Wood, and Macy's into living color, ratings of the film in most markets increased many times over that once earned by the original black-and-white print. Having won some limited viewer acceptance of this film's renovation, this firm and Turner announced plans to rehab over 100 other movie classics with color-tinting. In September 1986, TBS broadcast a computer-tinted print of "Yankee Doodle Dandy" as part of the year-long festivities surrounding the re-dedication of the Statute of Liberty. By May 1987, Turner Broadcast had realized over $1 million in net profits from this single colorized film.[6] While both of these films are considered classics, neither one of them is widely regarded as a milestone in the art of film.

Many craftsmen in the film community decry these colorization projects, because they allegedly violate the film director's artistic intentions. They also alter the original auras of the films' audience reception in black-and-white during the 1930s and 1940s in old-time movie palaces or the 1950s and 1960s on ancient TV sets. Gentrification, of course, usually entails some "displacement," or the forced relocation of former residents who no longer can afford to reside in their now improved and more expensive neighborhoods. With colorization, the displaced residents are mainly a collection of older film directors, 1940s movie buffs, or aesthetic purists, who all have rallied around the dubious banners of artistic integrity and authenticity.

6. *The Wall Street Journal*, May 15, 1987, p. 39.

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Master directors of black-and-white films, like Billy Wilder, John Houston and Woody Allen, vehemently oppose color tinting as a violation of their artistic freedoms and historical authenticity. Allen argues that this new film effect is "an ugly practice, totally venal, anti-artistic and against the integrity of every film maker." In addition, he asserts that "without the director's consent, it seems to me a criminal mutilation of his work."[7] The day after the Turner Broadcasting System first broadcast a colorized version of "The Maltese Falcon" in November 1986, John Huston declared in a news conference, "it's as though our children have been sold into white slavery and now the Turner organization has dyed their hair."[8] The American Film Institute and the Directors Guild of America also have voiced their strong displeasure with Turner Broadcasting System's plan to recode many more black-and-white masterpieces in computerized colors. Computer colorization, of course, does deface the initial intentions of directors and cinematographers in such works of art. The lingering tensions in the cinema arts between the industrial/commercial and aesthetic/craft-like aspects of film virtually are effaced in colorization. "All reification," as Horkheimer and Adorno suggest, "is a forgetting."[9] Colorizing black-and-white films is nothing but an instrumentally rational "forgetting" of one art's unique aesthetic or craft merely to make a stronger bid at bigger industrial and commercial pay-offs. While some black-and-white films could have been shot in color, many others purposely were photographed in that media to exploit its peculiar moods, texture and contrasts. Such photography is an art in itself with both special demands and unique rewards. In the eyes of cinemagraphic artists, abridging these creative realms of artistic choice with artificial *post hoc* colorizing is nothing but vandalism.

Vandalism, however, can be profitable. TBS proudly announced that the ratings for its initial broadcast of the colorized "Maltese Falcon" actually "were excellent, with 5.5% of the audience watching television compared with 3.6% for the Turner prime-time movie last month."[10] Television broadcasters argue that color now is the *normal* mode of presentation on today's mediascapes. It is so "normal" that several advertising agencies and many music video makers now shoot television ads and music clips in black-and-white to recapture the special shock effect once delivered by color footage. At the same time, film colorization is not cheap or easy. Current processes run around $1,800 to $2,000 per minute, which means that colorizing a typical ninety or hundred minute feature can cost $160,000 to $180,000 up-front.[11] Still, these sums are nothing compared to the millions more needed for producing most new movies.

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7. *The Los Angeles Times*, October 23, 1986; p. VI-1; and, *The Washington Post*, May 13, 1987, pp. F1 & F8.
8. *The New York Times*, November 14, 1986, p. C36.
9. Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (New York: Seabury, 1972), p. 230.
10. *The New York Times*, November, 14, 1986, p. C36.
11. *Ibid.*

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Films, however, are not the only candidates for colorization. The entire spectrum of late 1940s, 1950s and early 1960s black-and-white television programming also awaits computer colorizing. Turner Broadcasting is a major user of old animated cartoons and syndicated re-runs of old television series. Consequently, it plans to colorize the original episodes of "Gilligan's Island," and scores of old Popeye cartoons from the 1930s. These "properties" also can be recoded in colors that replicate old color pictures, like the tinted photos of 1940s *National Geographic* magazines, to harmonize their images with those of the ads imbedded in them for television broadcast.

Given these goals, computer colorization is stimulating a new industry in the form of cinema archaeology. Old set designs, costume sketches, production records and film scripts are scrutinized for signs of their original colors. Once these possibilities are determined, the computer digitalizes the film's frames and assigns the pre-coded color values to the scenes. Yet, the entire process actually is constituting new media mythologies, addressing artificial colors cybernetically to manufactured images on the basis of imperfect information. These overcoded replicas allegedly now reproduce the colors that could have been photographed but were not, given the expression of the medium. The colors are, in fact, less than vividly life-like. As Peter Bogdanovitch observed about "The Maltese Falcon," the process ultimately disappoints, "the coloring process makes Bogart's toupee look like a toupee, makes the sets look like sets and makes everything look fake."[12] Like the "restorations" in Colonial Williamsburg, these film texts now only embody what expert technicians want to believe the past probably looked like in color instead of recapturing the actual colors that now are lost forever. The "real colors" of the black-and-white artwork cannot be resurrected. Yet, by marketing the illusion of its possibility, via computerized image coding, a depreciated media property is revalorized in new color packaging for even wider circulation in today's global media markets.

Computer colorization actually is only the tip of the iceberg. It barely scrapes the surface of the audience's "aesthetic expectations" in the era of MTV. The logical implication of such rehab schemes is to go beyond mere restoration into a total reconstruction of the movie text. If films are merely properties that can be altered technically to suit the shifting tastes of new audiences, then many other revolutionary possibilities lie just beyond these primitive attempts merely to restore colors to film. Films also might be modernized through recasting, rescoring, reimaging, or rewriting — all to suit the changing expectations of today's audiences and advertisers.

Turner's premise for colorizing old films is that no one will watch a black-and-white movie on television or in a theater, especially if they have a color alternative. As the owner of the film property, Turner can modify it to suit what he, rightly or wrongly, perceives to be today's tastes. Why not recast these old movies as well? The big problem with most old black-and-white films is that

12. *Ibid.*

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their stars are dead or no longer "bankable" in terms of box office draw or viewer appeal in today's television markets. Occasionally, old black-and-white films can be capitalized upon in a sequel, which exploits the passage of time for their stars and story line (1986). "The Color of Money," for example, plays off of Paul Newman's extraordinary 1961 performance in "The Hustler" by recasting him in Jackie Gleason's role as an old doge of the pool room, while assigning Newman's old role as the slick young Turk of nine-ball to Tom Cruise. Yet, it is technically possible to recast old movies with today's stars through editing, inserts and careful refilming. Woody Allen's "Zelig" (1983) or Carl Reiner's "Dead Men Don't Wear Plaid," (1983), illustrate the ease with which contemporary actors can be realistically inserted into old film or edited into existing story lines to create a modernized cinemagraphic text. Video image processing also soon will be able to match new shots of today's actor's heads to yesterday's actor's bodies. Only the imagination prevents the owner of "Casablanca" from recasting the entire film with such a bill of recombinant players. For example, Paul Henri as Victor Laszlo could be replaced with today's more bankable William Hurt or Claude Rains as Captain Renault with John Cleese to play to the sensibilities of the 1980s without altering the Humphrey Bogart/Ingrid Bergman love story at the film's core. On the other hand, the secondary characters could remain the same, while the roles of Rich and Ilsa could be played by each new generation's brightest stars. For the sixties crowd, Robert Redford and Meryl Streep could return to Africa via Casablanca; for today's ticket buyers, Richard Gere and Natasha Kinski could rendezvous at Rick's *Cafe Americain*. For television, "Casablanca" could be transformed into a filmic "Loveboat," featuring an everchanging panoply of today's hottest stars.

Another flaw in old black-and-white films is the soundtrack. Several studios have already sought to remedy these problems by re-recording soundtracks in hi-fidelity or stereophonic media to improve sound quality. Again, Turner Broadcasting is missing the boat. The bland soundtracks of old black-and-white films could be given the full *Miami Vice* treatment of appropriate rock-and-roll hits to increase their audience. The pseudo-swing or be-bop jazz sound of 1950s films could be given the classic rock-and-roll soundtrack that Hollywood refused to record in most 1950s movies. More popular stars, like Jerry Lee Lewis, Billy Joel or Elton John could record their piano work over "Sam" (Dooley Wilson) in "Casablanca" or "Cricket" (Hoagy Carmichael) in "To Have and To Have Not," because no one recognizes the latter two today anyway. Films could even be packaged in different audio mixes to match the era of the consumers' image-sound-cultural identity. "Casablanca" still could be sold as "Casablanca Classic" with the original music and sound. But, more importantly, "New Casablanca" with the latest new wave hits and electronic sound effects, "Country Casablanca" with a Nashville twist, or "Casablanca 60s" with folk rock mix all could be produced to satisfy different demographic segments. Turner claims that "I'm colorizing 'Casablanca' just for the controversy's sake. Once people start watching the colored version they won't bother with the

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original."[13] A fresh menu of different soundtracks for "Casablanca" really could heave the old original into the dust bins of history. Not only would rescoring enhance the value of these film properties, such modernizing changes also would provide TBS with chances to package new soundtrack albums and revitalize the productivity of contemporary pop musicians.

Contemporary image consumers also are accustomed to many new editing and camera techniques as well as complex graphics, animation and image-alteration techniques that did not exist in classic black-and-white film technology. Old movies tend to assume a longer attention span from the viewers as well as some familiarity with a linear form of narrative. Much of today's audience, however, expects the non-linear simultaneities of a thirty-second ads or rock clip. Few of these techniques show up consistently in the mass market films of the major studios from the 1920s through the 1960s. Yet, quick cuts, fast wipes, hard close-ups, montage, image bricolage, computer graphics, clay animation, repeated out-takes, computer animation, sub-titling, artistic cel animation, solarizing, mood-tinting, negative images, and split-screening are routinely employed in music videos, commercial spots and news bulletins on everyday television.

As the owner of some very interesting film properties, Turner Broadcasting also is overlooking the possibilities of reimaging in its conservative restoration of color to old films. Almost any MTV video reveals several tricks for modernizing movie texts with animations, solarized or negative image segments or free-form color. "Casablanca's" opening scenes of a world at war, the bazaar, the arriving and departing aircraft are perfect iconic opportunities for new imaging techniques perhaps set to rescored soundtrack.[14] The industrialized dadaism or routinized surrealism of some Eurythmics, Talking Heads, Cars, or Rolling Stones videos could easily be imported into reimaging "Casablanca's" black-and-white narrative. Today's consumers already want to see these technologies in ads selling candy bars, sports cars, jeans, and pop music. There is no reason why they could not be used to revalorize classic film properties as well.

Another problem with old black-and-white films are their plots and dialogue. Many of these products were shot quickly and written on the spot as the actors fleshed out the story. "Casablanca" is a perfect case in point in that the writers rewrote dialogue daily, not knowing how to end the film until the last days of production. There often are gaps, inconsistencies or confusing sub-plots in many black-and-white texts. Similarly, such films are time-bound in the colloquialisms and concerns of their era. Anachronistic references to old time slang, products, public figures, sports heroes, and popular culture have less and less resonance with today's audiences. In the past, some directors or studios have dealt with these problems by retitling and rereleasing movies with perhaps a few sound dubs or edits. Charlie Chaplin, for example, re-edited with new voice-over narration some of his early silent films in the

13. *The Los Angeles Times*, October 23, 1986, p. VI-4.
14. *The Wall Street Journal*, September 1, 1987, pp. 1 and 25.

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1930s and 1940s as "talkies," once he recognized sound was more than a passing fad. Beyond the obvious potentials promised by dubbing and/or soundtracking old silent films, old black-and-white films could attract even more attention through rewriting dialogue or restructuring plots. Following the model devised by Woody Allen's "What's Up, Tiger Lily?," if old studio classics were treated like old Bruce Lee or Godzilla movies, then entirely new dialogue with the latest in slang and cultural allusions could be packaged for today's viewers. Corporations even could pay to have their products named by John Wayne, Mary Astor, or Spencer Tracy in new voices or stock impersonations throughout these modernized scripts. If image and color can be decomposed and cybernetically enhanced, then why not further break down voice, narrative and script from image for electronic reprocessing? Combined with recasting and rescoring, rewritten films could go beyond Hollywood's strategies of "sequels" and "prequels" to create "intraquels" within existing stories. Whole new sub-plots, story lines or episodic segments could be dropped into movies to clarify the plot for today's audiences.

Woody Allen's "Play It Again Sam" or "The Purple Rose of Cairo" provide some suggestive hints at how rewriting could restructure old films for today's television audiences. Victor and Ilsa's escape from the Nazis or Rick's and Louis' escape to Brazzaville after the Lisbon plane departs could be added to the "Casablanca" property in a new recast, rescored, reimaged and rewritten text. Recast actors could do spinoff films and programs, linking their storylines back to sub-plots in Casablanca. Or, recalling Francis Ford Coppola's remix of "The Godfather" (1972) and "The Godfather, Part 2" (1974) as the re-edited television version, "The Godfather Saga" (1977), a new film text of "The American Everyman in the Great Depression and World War II" could be restructured out of old John Garfield or Humphrey Bogart movies. With new dialogue, recasting, fresh narration and some reimaging, an entire epic could be fabricated from Bogart's personas in "They Drive By Night," "To Have and To Have Not," "Voyage to Marseilles," "Casablanca," "Sahara," and "Key Largo." It could surpass the yet to be (or never to be) funded and filmed entire "Star Wars" film cycle, because it is already mostly in the can. Once it was colorized and rescored, TBS could run this recycled text for five successive nights as an alternative to re-running *Centennial* or *Chiefs* yet again to sweep the national cablemarkets. The taste of today's media consumers for cynically preprocessed information, ranging from "The 700 Club" to George F. Will to *USA Today* to Ronald Reagan "news" conferences, suggests that rewritten old films could quickly win a major market position. Since the potential audiences already exist, Turner Broadcasting only needs the scripts to give viewers what they want.

Conclusions

These developments and possibilities in the struggle over film colorization call into question the autonomy of film as an art. Adorno's vision of aesthetic

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autonomy rests upon art "congealing into an entity unto itself — rather than obeying existing social norms and thus proving itself to be 'socially useful' — art criticizes society just by being there. Pure and immanently elaborated art is a tacit critique of the debasement of man by a condition that is moving towards a total exchange society where everything is a for-other."[15] For Adorno, "Art will live on only as long as it has the power to resist society. If it refuses to objectify itself, it becomes a commodity. What it contributes to society is not some directly communicable content but something more mediate, i.e. resistance."[16] Though some directors, from Charlie Chaplin to Woody Allen, have seen themselves engaged in tacit critiques of the debasement of man, the art of film rarely has congealed into an autonomous entity unto itself. And, what little resistance the movies foster — from Jimmy Cagney to James Dean to Peter Fonda to Clint Eastwood — all too often proves to be "socially useful" and rarely strays far from existing social norms.

The alleged autonomy and integrity of art in a world dominated by capitalist exchange relations always has been largely mythological, despite the theoretical efforts of Adorno or Marcuse to preserve some shreds of autonomy for aesthetic activity. If only to keep body and soul together or pay for new materials, an eye on profits — real, hoped-for or imagined — has always guided artists in their labors. Marcuse, for example, claims that "the truth of art lies in its power to break the monopoly of established reality (i.e. of those who established it) to *define* what is *real*. In this rupture, which is the achievement of the aesthetic form, the fictitious world of art appears as true reality."[17] Turner's colorization program plainly turns Marcuse on his head. Rather than breaking the monopoly of established reality, Turner's computer colorized films simply reiterate the realities of established monopoly as the powers of informationalized production invade and redefine the fictitious worlds of cinema art.

Marcuse's assertion, of course, "pre-supposes a degree of autonomy which withdraws art from the mystifying power of the given and frees it for the expression of its own truth."[18] This degree of autonomy, if indeed it ever even existed, is approaching zero in the current era. Rebellion, resistance or revolution, if properly presented in the commercial terms of cinematography, carry tremendous cash value. As informationalization has taken root, the production, consumption, distribution and management of images, symbols, codes and data has accelerated the transformation of art into new forms of cultural and financial capital. All across today's superheated art markets, gallery owners, critics and artists themselves constantly are touting art objects as highly secure and ever reliable "investment opportunities" for the shrewd buyer. Motion picture artists, as

15. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, *op. cit.*, p. 321.
16. *Ibid.*
17. Herbert Marcuse, *The Aesthetic Dimension: Toward a Critique of Marxist Aesthetics* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1978), p. 9.
18. *Ibid.*

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high overhead producers for mass national and transnational markets, always have had to be in the vanguard of this sales campaign.

Consequently, most film artists' pleas for new regulations to protect the purity of their work in this artistic environment come off sounding a bit lame. After bending their aesthetic/craft talents so completely to the production of marketable industrial commodities, these directors now are miffed that their "art" is being treated as if it is nothing more than a property or commodity. Their struggles are not so much brimming with resistance against capitalism as they are filled with resentment about losing control over "the look" of their old film stocks. It is difficult, then, to take seriously the director's complaints about colorization after they have tolerated the slicing and dicing of their films for decades to fit the time dictates of television formats. The fees for television release were large enough to overlook entire scenes and segments falling to the editing room floor everyday in hundreds of TV stations across the nation. And, while Woody Allen defends his right to artistic control in the colorization debate, it must be remembered that he once rode roughshod over his lesser known Japanese colleague's "artistic integrity" in the "What's Up, Tiger Lily?" remix to create a controversial and profitable new film effect.

Behind the conflicts between Ted Turner and many major figures in the film industry over the essentially false issue of "aesthetics" versus "profits," there are much larger social forces at work. In the last analysis, Turner Entertainment's acquisition and renovation of classic movies provides yet another example of how the American economy continues to informationalize in the late 20th century. The artists' defense of their alleged artistic integrity pales against the tremendous financial and technical powers opposed against them. The value-adding process in this informational mode of production transforms movies into a new raw material, an "image stock," which digitalized data processing can refabricate through colorization recoding programs, into a new informationalized commodity. The additional increments of new exchange-value derive from information-intensive remanufacturing, which, in turn, increases the film products' relative profitability in the broadcast, cable and home video media markets. In the process, many of the raw materials' former aesthetic merits may be reduced to an industrial waste. On the one hand, these implications are ignored to meet the technology's production quotas for image reprocessing. And, on the other hand, the outcry also must be played up in the media by the corporate colorizers to create even more viewer interest in their "new and improved" film commodities. The critiques that "autonomous" film artists have made about man's debasement in a total exchange society always have had to be tacit to sell tickets. Colorization, in some respects, simply continues this socially useful function by giving black-and-white films new, longer, stronger "legs" that only now are truly "techni-color."

Since the technologies for total film reconstruction already are on-line, colorization is probably is only the beginning. The four proposals modestly made above are not a reality, yet. Although Turner has discovered that computer

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colorizing (at $1,800 or more a minute) is not the cash-flow bonanza he expected, the entertainment industry's financial imperatives of growth undoubtedly will make more of these aesthetic experiments into common products for future media markets. Not surprisingly, the new recombinant relations of production at the heart of paper entrepreneurialism rest, at least in part, on these technology-intensive means of informational production. Film directors may grouse about the commercially motivated "tampering" with their artistic creations, but they are missing the big picture. The basis for a new industrial revolution is growing out of these film reprocessing facilities. And, for better or worse, the comparative advantage of America's political economy increasingly seems to depend upon such informational products, which are being manufactured in the colorization alloys derived from an amalgam of MGM's raw materials, Color Systems Technology, Inc.'s image recoding techniques, and the Turner Broadcasting System's electronic markets. Until artists and the larger public recognize that these social and economic forces are at play, the battle for everyone's authenticity will continue to be a losing struggle against the demands of the bottom line.

Machajsky and the New Class: A Reply to Haberkern

Anthony D'Agostino

Discussion about the role of intellectuals, or the rise of the New Class, invariably centers on the ideas of Jan Waclaw Machajsky, whose writings at the turn of the century had a deep impact on the Russian revolutionary movement. Machajsky sought to provide a class analysis of the socialist movement in which the intelligentsia turned out to be its principal beneficiary. Not surprisingly, his work has been attacked in the USSR, where Communist writers credit the intelligentsia with playing a role in bringing socialist consciousness to the proletariat, and where the intelligentsia, considered transformed by the events of the 1930s, is regarded as an indispensable ally of the proletariat in socialist construction.

Machajsky is loved as little by western socialists, even those who consider the USSR to be dominated by a bureaucratic ruling class. Haberkern's imaginative

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and stimulating polemic against Machajsky[1] thus defends socialist parties and trade unions from Machajsky's criticisms, even finding that the Polish-Russian radical himself can be called a "forerunner" of Stalinism and fascism. In the process, Haberkern also criticizes "Machajsky scholars," myself included, for inflating the stock of Machajsky's presumed "predictions" of the rise of Stalinism. Marshall Shatz is chided for seeing Machajsky as a "prescient opponent of the coming totalitarianism" and an influence on Soviet oppositions of the 1920s. These Machajsky scholars are further said to be in sympathy with Machajsky while Machajsky is in sympathy with the pogromist Black Hundreds of the 1905 Revolution — a fact which presumably causes us to "fall back in confusion."

Actually, Haberkern recapitulates much of the debate "Machajsky scholars" had concerning the nature and implications of his writings.[2] We had all studied Machajsky's texts available in libraries and had visited Machajsky's disciple and popularizer, Max Nomad (Max Nacht), who had put at our disposal whatever manuscript material and correspondence he had. The emphasis in my own interpretation was not on Machajsky's predictions about the future of Bolshevism. I argued that his criticism was aimed primarily at orthodox western social democracy and its expectations about "bourgeois progress." I emphasized Machajsky's critical support for Bolshevism in his *Rabochaia revoliutsiia* of 1918. He considered the Bolsheviks, unlike the other socialists, to be faithful to the revolutionary spirit of the *Communist Manifesto*. He was especially impressed with their crushing of a strike by government workers who had withheld keys to offices and access to funds in banks. He applauded Bolshevik action against this "intelligentsia counter-revolution." His criticism of the Soviet government related to its proclaimed goal of building state capitalism and its failure to nationalize more than a handful of enterprises; in this respect it can be compared, e.g., to the views of the "Left" communists, Bukharin and Ossinskii, who also criticized Lenin's policy in the spring of 1918. We have no evidence of Machajsky opposing Bolshevism on any score from this point to his death in 1926.[3]

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1. Ernest Haberkern, "Machajsky: A Rightfully Forgotten Prophet," in *Telos* 71 (Spring 1987), pp. 111-28.

2. Paul Avrich, "What is 'Makhaevism'?" *Soviet Studies* (July, 1965); Marshall Shatz, "The Conspiracy of the Intellectuals," *Survey* (January, 1967) and "The Makhaevists and the Russian Revolutionary Movement," *International Review of Social History*, vol. 15 (1970), p. 2; Anthony D'Agostino, "Intelligentsia Socialism and the 'Workers' Revolution': The Views of J. W. Machajsky," *International Review of Social History*, vol. 14 (1969), p. 2.

3. A leading Menshevik later reflected on the apparent paradox: "I might remark that despite myself I was struck by the analogy between the Bolsheviks after 1917and *Makhaevshchina*: the similarity in method and content of the critique of social democracy, as in the unleashing of 'hunger revolts' (the Leninist 'robbing the robbers,' the 'liquidation of the bourgeoisie,' the baiting of the intelligentsia). On the other side, the party dictatorship of the Bolsheviks over the proletariat justified Machajsky's prediction of the danger of the accession to power of the 'intellectual workers,' engineers and technicians, organizers of the economy masquerading as socialists." P.A. Garvi, *Vospominaniia sotsialdemokrata* (New York, 1946), pp. 291-92.

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So, the notion that Machajsky's work is a warning against the Stalinist "revolution" of the 1930s (not an inherently ridiculous idea) is not backed by any direct claims by Machajsky himself. Haberkern therefore turns his attention to Max Nomad, who saw the rule of intellectuals in regimes fronted by Stalin and even by Mussolini and Hitler. Nomad, along with Machajsky, saw intellectuals as a rising historical force, therefore a "progressive" one. Haberkern ties this to the fact that Machajsky went so far as to see "class antagonism" in Black Hundred anti-intellectualism, and there emerges his contribution to this debate: Machajsky and the anarchists were "predisposed to the demagogy of a plebeian movement," so this predisposed them to accept Stalinism and fascism. Why not? Anarchists, Makhaevists, Stalinists, and fascists all hate democracy and claimed to represent progress, did they not? Haberkern thus submits to the temptation to make a little amalgam. But this attempt to discover Machajsky's "secret" is not very promising.

By insisting that hatred for democracy is the *primum mobile* in Machajsky's thought, Haberkern reaches for the most dramatic charge he can locate. Machajsky thus hated democracy so much that he supported the Black Hundreds. But this fails as political and intellectual biography. Machajsky did not enter political activity in a milieu where democracy or trade union rights were the norm. He was a Polish patriot in his *gymnasium* days and after that a member of several emigré nationalist organizations. By 1888 he was associated with the National Socialists led by Boleslaw Limanowski, who coupled the idea of patriotism and socialism in much the same way that, e.g., Friedrich Neumann coupled "National and Social" in Germany. Machajsky eventually became disillusioned with Polish patriotism. "The patriots remain socialists. But I feel they do so only to draw the working masses into the fight for the 'fatherland'; these aristocrats do not think about the liberation of the working class, but only about that of the Polish state."[4] The first part of Machajsky's opus *The Intellectual Worker* (1905) makes this perspective clear. He angrily accused the Polish Socialists of ignoring the Polish strike wave of the 1890s and reproached them for subordinating the Polish movement to the Russian program of bourgeois revolution, in return for the Russian socialists' endorsement of national independence for Poland. A sovereign Poland would not be economically viable, he warned,[5] and will probably seek to annex Byelorussia and the Ukraine. Nationalism suited the Polish socialists, Machajsky thought, because the Polish intelligentsia wanted to assume control of governmental institutions then occupied by Russians. And Russian social democracy in exile wanted an international struggle to bring to Tsarist Russia a bourgeois revolution. Machajsky went on to charge that Bernstein and Kautsky were essentially similar

4. Quoted in Wiera Machajska, "Zycie i poglady Waclawa Machajskyego," *Wiadomosci* (London) March 4, 1962, p. 2.

5. An argument that Rosa Luxemburg also made against what she called the "social patriots" of the PPS (Polish Socialist Party) of Josef Pilsudski.

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in putting national interest above the class claims of the workers. In the economic argument of the second part of *The Intellectual Worker*, he made this accusation against Marx and Engels as well. His attacks on the international social democracy were "anti-democratic," but they originated in anti-patriotism. One can imagine how the actions of the socialist parties in WWI reinforced his most bitter convictions.

Haberkern also fastens onto Nomad's suggestion that Stalin's and Mussolini's regimes demonstrate the rise to power of the New Class. As such, says Haberkern, they would be "progressive" in the eyes of a Nomad, or if Nomad is correct, of Machajsky himself. This becomes part of the charge that anarchists and Makhaevists were "predisposed to accept" fascism and Stalinism. But Machajsky was not a Marxist; "progressive" does not mean for him "worthy of support." One can find proof of this throughout Machajsky's writings but nowhere more clearly than in his discussion of the young Marx.

Machajsky thought that Marxism had been poisoned at the roots by its development from German philosophy. True, he said, Marx and Engels occasionally spoke as true materialists, as when they compared modern wage workers to the slaves of antiquity. But, at bottom, Marx was only trying to connect the subject of philosophy to the labor movement in order for philosophy to become the "head" for the proletariat the "heart." This was only a Feuerbachian materialism seeking to link the fate of the proletariat to a fetish of historical progress, promising it liberation through the development of productive forces.[6] This was the "old utopian standpoint of *one* society and *one* humanity."[7] Machajsky thought that the New Class was expanding with industrial development, which for the proletariat meant only continued enslavement. The workers must remember that history was not on their side.

The ideas of pre-1914 anti-parliamentarians were certainly wild and woolly, and sometimes just woolly. But it seems obtuse to profess shock that they would suspect the leaders of socialist parties and trade unions of motives less perfect than St. Francis of Assisi. To accuse them of a "predisposition" to Caesaristic regimes is not very acute either. Every anarchist and Makhaevist within the reach of the NKVD was shot in 1936-8. Many of them had already thrown in their lot with Bolshevism, although many had not.[8] None of them, with or without the aid of Machajsky, could have foreseen the full blossom of Stalinism. Indeed, whether one could grasp the unique historical dynamic of this sad period in terms of the rise of the New Class remains doubtful.

It is impossible, however, to deny the impact of the theory of the New Class, especially in its Soviet setting, on the intellectual history of this century.

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6. J. W. Machajsky, translator's preface to K. Marx and F. Engels, *Sviatoe semeistvo* (St. Petersburg, 1906) vol. 1, pp. 39-63.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 47.

8. For their views, see my *Marxism and the Russian Anarchists* (San Francisco, 1977), chs. 5-7, or Paul Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists* (Princeton, 1967), ch. 8.

9. James Burnham, *The Managerial Revolution* (Bloomington, 1960), p. viii.

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Nikolai Ustrialov saw this class, along with the kulak and the NEPman, as the gravedigger of the NEP in the 1920s. Zinoviev accused Stalin-Bukharin of unwittingly preparing its way. Albert Treint, Hugo Urbahns, Simone Weil, Lucien Laurat and others used it in various ways to try to understand Stalinism as "a state neither capitalist nor proletarian." Yvan Craipeau, Joe Carter, James Burnham, Max Shachtman and many others followed in their footsteps. Many of those who offered or criticized New Class theories recognized Machajsky as their most important source. Trotsky said that Laurat's ideas had already been worked out much better by Machajsky. Burnham's preface to his *Managerial Revolution* acknowledged a debt.[9] During WWII, C. L. R. James even arrived independently at Machajsky's interpretation of the extended reproduction formulae from Vol. II of *Capital* — a thesis that comprises the second part of *The Intellectual Worker*.

Postwar commentators have generally ignored Machajsky. This is the case with Djilas' New Class and Voslenskii's Nomenklatura. However, this may be taken as a demonstration of the attractions of the New Class idea, which seems to be continually reproduced in East Europe, even among those who show no familiarity with its history.

Haberkern's critique of Machajsky, despite its sharp focus on the most rabid aspects of Machajsky's anti-intellectualism, does not pay enough attention to Machajsky's ideas. The effect is that of a chapter in the continuing debate over whether there is a socialism from below — a debate that absorbed Max Nomad and Hal Draper in the sixties. It may be nice to have a finely wrought position on this question, but it is not necessary in order to appreciate the importance of Machajsky. On the New Class, he is certainly a better point of departure than Marx, since the term "petite-bourgeoisie" seems entirely useless for describing the armies of civil servants, administrators, managers, superintendents, professional and technical personnel, etc., that characterize modern society. Societies like the Soviet Union offer the spectacle of a simplification of the social structure to one with "intellectual workers" and manual workers — a fact which gives their efforts to reshape the relation, as in Gorbachev's Soviet Union, a special fascination. Anyone who wants to trace the history of this relation has to consult Machajsky. To criticize him is, of course, a necessity, but to dismiss him is a blunder.

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*Lévi-Strauss' Mythology of the Myth**

Renate Schlesier

"You find in New York a magic place where childhood dreams converge; where century-old tree trunks sing and speak; where undefinable objects with anxiously startling faces lie waiting for the visitor, where animals of a superhuman grace fold their paws to pray for the privilege to build the beaver palace for the chosen one, to be his guides to the kingdom of the seals, or to teach him, through a mystical kiss, the language of the frog or the kingfisher. This place, where old-fashioned but most efficacious museographic methods confer the additional prestige of the *clair-obscur* caves and the tumble-down hoard of lost treasures — one can visit it daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. in the *American Museum of Natural History*: it is a hall . . . dedicated to the Indian tribes of the north Pacific coast from Alaska to British Columbia."[1] The dreamy 35 year old who wrote this in 1943 had been a professor at the New School for Social Research since 1941.[2] In his leisure hours he and his friends, Max Ernst and André Breton, searched through the city's antique shops, sharing the dusty treasures from the workshops of North and South American natives, which back then sold at cut-rate prices. This son of a painter and grandson of the rabbi of Versailles pursued his avant-garde interest in exotica with the enthusiasm of a missionary. In 1947, by now cultural attaché at the French embassy, he tried to convince his government to purchase, in exchange for paintings by Matisse and Picasso, a precious collection of Indian sculptures, jewelry and masks to be placed as works of art of equal rank beside the statues of the Chartres Cathedral and the emblems of Versailles.[3] This dream, however, remained unfulfilled.

Claude Lévi-Strauss did not become known as a dreamer. His name is linked with a movement which sought to introduce mathematical rigor in the human sciences. Even its opponents admit that this campaign continues through

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* This is a slightly abbreviated version of "Ödipus, Parsival und die Wilden," originally published in Richard Faber and Renate Schlesier, eds., *Die Restauration der Götter* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1986). Translated by Harold Stadler.

1. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *La voie des Masques* (Paris, 1979), p. 9.
2. See Mireille Mar-Lipiansky, *Le structuralisme de Lévi-Strauss* (Paris, 1973), p. 24.
3. Cf. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *La voie des masques*, *op. cit.*, p. 12-13, and *Le Regard éloigné* (Paris, 1983), pp. 348-349. Lévi-Strauss's father and two of his uncles were painters. See B. Pingaud, "Comment on devient structuraliste," *L'Arc*, No. 26; and *Claude Lévi-Strauss* (Paris, 1968), p. 1 reprinted in R. Bellour, C. Clément, eds., *Claude Lévi-Strauss* (Paris, 1970), pp. 15-16; Lévi-Strauss himself collected exotica from the age of six, cf. *Tristes Tropiques* (Paris, 1955), p. 57.

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sociology and ethnology, archaeology and philology. In the US, France and many other European countries, the appeal of this research method is still growing. "Structuralism"[4] sounds as though the program it proclaims — the reconciliation of sciences and humanities — had actually been accomplished. Yet, what is a structure?[5] According to its Latin derivation, it is a construction, a composition. As a technical term, the word "structure" first became established in chemistry (in connection with the organization of the atoms in the molecule) and in geology (in relation to the strata). The notion of structure was introduced to linguistics in the 1920s by Roman Jakobson, Levi-Straus' teacher in New York, and by the founder of phonology, Prince Nikolai Sergeievitch Trubetskoi, and later transferred from linguistics to anthropology by Lévi-Strauss himself.[6] Its use has become increasingly diverse and complicated and is highly enigmatic today.[7]

In Lévi-Strauss' work the term "structure" is even more vague.[8] He employs the term whenever he wants to claim a logically unambiguous connection between phenomena which are only superficially related or, at most, contiguous. The main model of this relatively arbitrary accumulation of objects is the museum, or even the flea market. One resorts to the term "structure" whenever one wants to reduce various objects to a common denominator. The sources of this impulse can be traced back to Lévi-Strauss' hymn to the singing tree trunks and kissing frogs in New York's Museum of Natural History. An even clearer illustration is provided by Baudelaire's remark about the 1855 Paris World's Fair. Lévi-Strauss cites it in his *Le regard éloigné* (which was to be the third volume of his *Structural Anthropology*), where it appears as a motto for the essays on the family,

4. On the history of structuralism, see M. Bierwisch, "Strukturalismus. Geschichte, Probleme, Methoden," *Kursbuch* 5 (1966), pp. 77-151 (revised version in *Literaturewissenschaft und Linguistik*, vol. I, pp. 17-90); J. Piaget, *Le structuralisme* (Paris, 1968); F. Wahl ed., *Qu'est-ce que le structuralisme?* (Paris, 1968); G. Schiwy, *Der französische Strukturalismus* (Reinbek, 1969); also Schiwy's *Neue Aspekte des Strukturalismus* (Hamburg, 1971).

5. See R. Bastide ed., *Sens et usage du terme structure dans les sciences humaines et sociales*, 2nd edition (The Hague/Paris, 1972); H. Naumann, ed., *Der moderne Strukturbegriff* (Darmstadt, 1973); cf. also, G. Lieberg, "Der Begriff *structura* in der lateinischen Literatur," *Hermes* 81 (1956), pp. 455-77.

6. Cf. Lévi-Strauss, "L'analyse structurale en linguistique et en anthropologie," *Anthropologie Structurale* (Paris, 1958) pp. 40-42; "Les leçons de la linguistique," *Le regard éloigné*, *op. cit.*, pp. 191-201. See also E. R. Leach, *Claude Lévi-Strauss* (New York, 1970); Cathérine Backès-Clément, *Claude Lévi-Strauss* (Paris, 1970); M. Oppitz, *Notwendige Beziehungen. Abriß der structuralen Anthropologie* (Frankfurt, 1975); H. J. Heinrichs, "Die strukturale Anthropologie von Claude Lévi-Strauss," in Heinrichs, *Sprachkörper. Zu Claude Lévi-Strauss und Jacques Lacan* (Frankfurt and Paris, 1983), pp. 47-96.

7. Cf. Oppitz, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-18. Oppitz lists 41 synonyms for the word "structure."

8. For Lévi-Strauss's understanding and usage of the term "structure" in distinction to his precursors and critics, see "La notion de structure en ethnologie," *Anthropologie Structurale*, *op. cit.*, pp. 303-51.; "Les limites de la notion de structure en ethnologie," R. Bastide, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-45. Cf. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Le totémisme aujourd'hui* (Paris, 1965), pp. 129-31 *Totemism*, trans. Rodney Needham (Boston, 1963); also *Paroles données* (Paris, 1984), pp. 31-34.

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marriage, and kinship: "There are few occupations that are as interesting and attractive, or that reveal such a wealth of surprises and revelations to a critic, a dreamer, whose spirit is as devoted to generalization as it is to the study of details or, to put it even more aptly, to the idea of a universal order and hierarchy, as is the comparison of nations and their respective products."[9]

The study of details and the promise of a generalized order and hierarchy — the goal of Lévi-Strauss' method — could not be summarized more concisely. Its promise of surprises and revelations is equally enticing for critics and dreamers. The proof of the attraction of this method is its universal applicability, which is not derived from the objects, the "details" themselves, but from their arbitrary arrangement. Structuralism tries to outdo the offerings of the museum and the world's fair. It invites one to deal practically with these promising details, or (to use one of Lévi-Strauss's favorite expressions) to manipulate them according to easily learned rules.[10]

First of all, one must develop the model of a playing field on which the same procedure can be repeated.[11] The basic rule of the game is to concentrate on classification.[12] Structuralist ordering claims to be non-ideological, while at the same time allowing the rejection of disappointing ideologies. The world is no longer divided into good and evil, holy and profane, oppressors and oppressed, possessors and dispossessed. These oppositions are not universal: they cannot be applied to everything; they cannot be processed through a computer. Thus, the highly emotional antitheses developed by psychoanalysis have also failed as clear and definite distinctions. The differences between male and femal, oral and anal, neurosis and healthy, love and hate, etc. can hardly be squeezed into the Procrustean bed of a binary system. After all, today almost everyone knows that a sadist is also a masochist. By contrast, the oppositions privileged by structuralism, provide unequivocal differentiations. Clearly, whatever is put on the table can only be raw or cooked (or, for that matter, fried, stewed, or boiled, etc.), and a person is either naked or dressed, regardless of

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9. Cf. Baudelaire, *Exposition universelle de 1855*, in *Curiosités esthétique. L'Art romantique et autres Oeuvres critiques* (Paris, 1962) p. 209; cited in Lévi-Strauss, *Le regard éloigné*, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

10. Lévi-Strauss, "La structure des mythes," *Anthropologique structurale*, *op. cit.*, p. 235. Cf. Roland Barthes' view of the structuralist treatment of given objects, "L'activité structuraliste," *Les Lettres Nouvelles* (February, 1963).

11. Cf. Lévi-Strauss's analogy of game and rite, *La pensée sauvage* (Paris, 1962), pp. 44-47; *The Savage Mind* (Chicago, 1966). For a critique of Lévi-Strauss's notion of the game, see Jacques Derrida, "La structure, le signe et le jeu dans le discours des sciences humaines," in *L'écriture et la différence* (Paris, 1967), pp. 409-28.

12. Structuralist classification is justified as a mimetic act supposedly homologous to the "savage mind"; cf. Lévi-Strauss, "La logique des classifications totémiques," *La pensée sauvage*, *op. cit.*, pp. 48-99; see also a critique of this attempt to escape the hermeneutic circle in Paul Ricoeur, "Structure et herméneutique," *Esprit* 31 (1963), pp. 596-627; and Lévi-Strauss's justification of this procedure, "Résponses à quelques questions," *Esprit* 31 (1963), pp. 628-53.

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how much one wears: as everyone knows, even a loin-cloth or a fig-leaf makes us different from the way God created us.

For aspiring graduate students, structuralism offers more than the simple advantage of applying everything learned back in kindergarden (or, later, with the mini-computer). Once you master the basic rules, you may hope for exciting degrees of complexity. The disciple has passed the apprentice's examination when the formula which Lévi-Strauss found for myths no longer seems an algebraic abracadabra, i.e., when the disciple knows why myths can be reduced to the following combination of letters and numbers:[13]

$$Fx\ (a) : Fy\ (b) = Fx\ (b) : Fa\text{-}I\ (y)$$

Despite the high-priestly seriousness with which Lévi-Strauss presents this puzzle in order to separate the sheep from the goats in the various academic fields, his own treatment of myths occasionally reveals a playful quality. Yet, as he assures us, that is nothing but a mimetic conformity to the myths. In his conception they are not exactly a "*jeu gratiut*,"[14] i.e. they are not completely insignificant, but they resemble the symbols which he conceives as *jetons*[15] in a combinatorial game. The rules obeyed by the myths, which he claims to have discovered, he calls "arcana of a game,"[16] i.e., secrets hitherto concealed. The only possible means to decode them is the structuralist method.

The affinity of this method with surrealism has been indicated by Lévi-Strauss in *La pensée sauvage*. There he introduced the term "*bricolage*," the tinkering with and putting together of available objects, of odds and ends, in order to create a new and surprising whole; and he exemplified "*bricolage*" by means of primitive art. What primitive art and the surrealist collage technique have in common is that the *bricolage* is neither an end in itself nor does it serve any practical purpose. They both fulfill contemplative needs.[17] In 1980 Lévi-Strauss wrote that when Max Ernst demanded of objects he used that they be something other than

13. Lévi-Strauss, "La structure des mythes," *op. cit.*, pp. 252-53; cf. *Paroles données*, *op. cit.*, p. 13. Reservations as to the universal applicability of this formula are expressed in W. Burkert, "Mythisches Denken. Versuch einer Definition an Hand des griechischen Befundes," in H. Poser, ed., *Philosophie und Mythos. Ein Kolloquium* (Berlin/New York, 1979), p. 25.

14. Lévi-Strauss, *Anthropologie Structurale*, *op. cit.*, p. 228.

15. Lévi-Strauss, *Le Pensée sauvage*, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

16. Cf. also Lévi-Strauss on marriage nomenclatures as an example of a code to be deciphered, *Le régard éloigné*, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

17. On the analogy of mythical thought and "*bricolage*," see Lévi-Strauss, *La Pensée sauvage*, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-33; and pp. 32 and 43-44 (contemplative purposes); on the philosophical value of the model, cf. K. Stierle, "Mythos als 'Bricolage' und zwei Endstufen des Prometheusmythos," in M. Fuhrmann, ed., *Terror und Spiel. Probleme der Mythenrezeption* (Munich, 1971), pp. 455-72; see also the programmatic defense of the model (goal: the transformation of the philosopher into a mythologist) in N. W. Bolz, "Odds and ends. Vom Menschen zum Mythos," in K. H. Bohrer, ed., *Mythos und Moderne. Begriff und Bild einer Rekonstruktion* (Frankfurt, 1983), pp. 471-92.

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what they were, he was inspired by the past.[18]

Lévi-Strauss's own playing with myths, a surrealistically serious game, could not be described more precisely than this. Yet, he warns his apprentices, one can play with myths only if and as long as they are a game themselves. Here as elsewhere in his work, the analogy serves as a substitute for an explanation. The analogy works like two mirrors facing each other.[19] Whether they are called myth and game or whether they bear other names makes no difference; they can only reflect one another *ad infinitum*.

The term "analysis," as used by Lévi-Strauss, is therefore misleading: the structuralist method camouflages itself as an analytical procedure,[20] yet it is defined by a mode of thought based on analogy and correspondence. It transforms the world into a magic place where everything may relate to, compare with, and stand for, everything else. The profane mysticism structuralism attempts to introduce in the academic establishment is only scantily concealed by the scientific disguise. Nothing can be analyzed with the tools of structuralism; it is only possible to relate things. But these relations are not analyzed, rather they are torn apart and rearranged in any possible combination. Only these combinations, not the given relations, are considered significant. This is the basic rule of every game which Lévi-Strauss detects in myths. Since both myth and game have a broad range of variation and repetition, both phenomena take on a quasi-religious function: they immobilize time and enthrone chance.[21] Just like the player (or, for Baudelaire, the poet), the structuralist

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18. Cf. Lévi-Strauss, "A un jeune peintre," in *Le regard éloigné*, *op. cit.*, p. 342.

19. In order to illustrate his idea of the dissolution of man in "nature" and in the "world," Lévi-Strauss likes to take recourse to the metaphor of the mirror, cf. *La pensée sauvage*, *op. cit.*, p. 294; seen from the outside, the metaphor of two mirrors facing each other visualizes the invariant balance of analogous elements such as "*bricolage*" and mythical thought, or rite and game; seen from the inside, it symbolizes the myths' independence of the subject and of meanings determined solely by their balanced relations among each other; cf. Lévi-Strauss, *Mythologiques I. Le cru et le cuit* (Paris, 1964), p. 242, and "Structuralisme et écologie," *Le regard éloigné*, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

20. Lévi-Strauss' use of the term "analysis" conceals a hypostasis of the terms "system" and "synthesis," cf. *La pensée sauvage*, *op. cit.*, p. 174. His supposedly analytical method consists of the dissection of a whole into single elements considered essential, such as, above all, binary oppositions; this procedure, however, ignores the elements not consistent with the system, and even the parts that are produced by this reduction are not really analyzed. This is justified with the proclaimed universality of the phonological model: "meaning always results from the combination of elements which are not significant themselves" (Lévi-Strauss, "Réponses à quelques questions," *op. cit.* p. 637), Lévi-Strauss has tried to radicalize this idea by establishing a Mytho-Logic, cf. *Mythologiques IV. L'homme nu* (Paris, 1971), p. 571.

21. Lévi-Strauss' favoring of chance is to be seen as analogous to the surrealist invocation of the "*hasard objectif*," cf. *La pènsée sauvage*, *op. cit.* p. 32; the scientific weight of the terms "randomness" and "arbitrariness" in structuralism is derived from Saussure's notion of the arbitrariness of the linguistic sign, cf. Ferdinand de Saussure, *Cours de linguistiqe générale* (1915; 3rd edition, Paris, 1949), pp. 100-101; see also Lévi-Strauss, *Mythologiques I*, *op, cit.*, pp. 230.

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manipulator of myths is an "*hasardeur*," a daring gambler — a heroic figure.[22] Yet, a gambler who can only win is obviously not a tragic figure, even if his game is a matter of life and death. Such a player assumes divine power. In his *Tableaux parisiens*, Baudelaire portrayed the poet who saunters about the city as a fencer and gambler bound to win. He compares his supernatural talents, which ennoble the fate of the meanest things, with the force of the sun.[23]

With this figure of the poet, Lévi-Strauss shares the solar pretension and the Apollonian mask of a murderer. "To win a game means to 'kill' the opponent."[24] — He finds this lesson confirmed in all North American mythology. Inspired by Baudelaire, this type of anthropologist plays with myths as the cat plays with mice. This Baudelairian inspiration may be traced through Lévi-Strauss' entire work. At pivotal points in his arguments he paraphrases or quotes Baudelaire, usually in solemn anonymity as "the poet,"[25] which is the way Homer was cited in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.

Lévi-Strauss did not content himself with following, through the streets and museums of New York and Paris, the footsteps of Baudelaire, and wandering through forests of symbols under the influence of speaking pillars. Like every passionate collector, he enters into "an almost carnal relation"[26] with rarities. This intimacy makes human relations appear pale. Even in the real rain forests of South America, he remained the urban *flaneur* obsessed by the materiality of the world:[27] the customs and habits of the savages as well as their myths are in no way different from museum exhibits. The tropical forest is a museum and, like the museum, it is also a magic castle whose human and animal inventory yearn for deliverance.

Lévi-Strauss believes he has found the key to this release — the "Open, Sesame!" — and since this is a modern fairy tale, he calls it the "code." The fairy tale hero[28] he wants the modern anthropologist to be has little in common with the

22. Cf. Walter Benjamin, "Über einige Motive bei Baudelaire," in *Illuminationen* (Frankfurt/Main, 1961), p. 224; "The image of the gambler became the modern counterpart, in Baudelaire, to the archaic image of the fencer. The one appears to him as a heroic figure just as the other."

23. See Baudelaire, "Le Soleil," in *Les fleurs du mal*, Y. G. Le Dantec, ed. (Paris, 1958), p. 92.

24. Lévi-Strauss, *La pensée sauvage*, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

25. Lévi-Strauss, *Mythologiques IV*, *op. cit.*, p. 12. Lévi-Strauss paraphrases the first strophe of the poem, "Correspondances": "La Nature est un temple où de vivants piliers/ Laissent travers des forêts de symboles / Qui l'observent avec des regards familiers" (in *Fleurs du mal*, *op. cit.*, p. 11). See also *Le regard éloigné*, *op. cit.*, p. 200, where Lévi-Strauss equates the role he gives to myth with the role Baudelaire grants music; cf. *Mythologiques I*, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

26. Lévi-Strauss, *La voie des masques*, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

27. Cf., for example, the praise of contemplation at the end of *Tristes Tropiques*, *op. cit.*, pp. 479-80.

28. See Lévi-Strauss, *Mythologiques I*, *op. cit.*, p. 40. Before the logic of myths could be found, a magical forest of images and signs has to be passed through. Lévi-Strauss's own stylization of the myth analyst as a hero of a fairy tale corresponds with his application

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hero of classical antiquity. Unlike Hercules, he need not fight with lions, wild boars and serpents with a hundred heads; instead, he leaves them as they are. Released from their spell by this decoding, the monsters turn out to be what they were always supposed to be: rigid material that reveals the eternally unchanging nature of the mind.[29]

Rather than struggle with monsters, like Alice-in-Wonderland's bunny, the magic anthropologist makes a pact with more innocent little animals to serve as guides. But the roles in the fairy tale are reversed: it is no longer the frog who wants to be transformed into a prince by the kiss of the princess; rather, the contemplative wanderer through the world-as-museum wants to be kissed by the frogs and to be taught the language of objects. For Lévi-Strauss, these frogs and other charming little animals have assumed the role of the classical muses. They have told him the password, he discloses it to us with the pride of an inspired poet: its name is "structure."

Now "structure" turns out to be a pseudonym, invented for the uninitiated, that stands for another word highly charged with the metaphor of fate in Western mythology. Its name is "web."[30] Consequently, the analyst who ends these mythical "spells" can model himself on an ancient female figure of myth: he calls his task "Penelope's work."[31] The nightly unraveling of a fabric produced during the day has assumed proverbial universality since Homer's *Odyssey*.

Recourse to a female model is not coincidental. Surely, this is not a singular digression from an otherwise strictly virile hero's path. Lévi-Strauss' meditative attitude explicitly takes women as its model. In his view, it is their function in all societies to be exchanged by men in order to make social relations possible in the first place.[32] As non-acting beings, women are by definition excluded from

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to the myths of the morphology of the fairy-tale as developed by V. Propp; see Lévi-Strauss, "La structure et la forme. Reflexions sur un ouvrage de Vladimir Propp." *Anthropologie structurale deux* (Paris, 1973), pp. 139-73.

29. To Lévi-Strauss myths prove that the human mind has functioned the same way at all places and at all times. He sees in them an image of the world engraved in the "architecture of the mind," *Mythologiques I*, *op. cit.*, p. 346 and p. 18; Cf. *Mytholgoiques II. Du miel aux cendres* (Paris, 1966), p. 346; *Mythologiques IV*, *op. cit.*, p. 571.

30. See Lévi-Strauss' comparison of the structure of myths with a net, *Mythologiques IV*, *op. cit.*, p. 603; Lévi-Strauss' reading of myths as both the stuff of nature and a product of culture also allows for a mystification of the linguistic notion of the "text" in that he traces it back to the Latin *textus*, fabric, texture.

31. Lévi-Strauss, *Mythologiques I*, *op. cit.*, p. 13. This does not affect, however, the constant and objective stability of the structure. It is not intended to open up the notion of structure toward the Neo-Structuralism of Lacan, Derrida, and Foucault; cf. M. Frank *Was ist Neostrukturalismus?* (Frankfurt/Main, 1983), pp. 66-68.

32. Cf. Lévi-Strauss, *Les structures élémentaires de la parenté*, 2nd ed. (Paris/La Haye, 1967), pp. 548-50; see also "La familie," in *Le régard eloigné*, *op. cit.*, pp. 65-92, esp. p. 90, and "Language et societé," *Anthropologie structurale*, *op. cit.*, p. 70, where Lévi-Strauss rejects the accusation that *Les structures élémentaires de la parenté* was anti-feminist. He did treat women like words, as elements of a sign system. The difference, however, was that women speak and words do not.

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the most sacred rites, which of course include the exchange of women. Hence they are "spectators by destiny,"[33] and they need not, to paraphrase Schiller, go out into the hostile world.

The social nature of woman thus conceived assimilates the female gender to the Buddhist sage. Lévi-Strauss muses that the development from Buddhism via Christianity to Islam amounts to a history of decay. Christianity has missed the opportunity for an "osmosis" with Buddhism. His resigned reverie culminates in the statement: therefore, "the Occident has missed its chance to remain Woman."[34] He may be going back a little too far in history when he credits himself with a "Neolithic mode of thought."[35] His thinking habits are much more recent and far more restricted regionally. To understand them, we do not have to reach as far as the Stone Age.

Why do myths and savages have such attraction for Lévi-Strauss? Why did he not express in poetry his identification with female and (as we shall see) male figures of Greek mythology? With his penchant for order and hierarchy, why did he not turn to those myths which traditionally serve as universal models of Western thought, the epic tales of gods and heroes from classical antiquity?

First of all, chance naturally had a hand in it. In the university, the young student had seen philosophy as a boring and decadent pastime. After he graduated from a Paris elite school, he became a philosophy teacher at a provincial *lycée*. There he faced the insipid, even "terrifying" prospect of repeating until the end of his professional life the same subjects over and over again.[36] No wonder, then, that he was eager to escape this desolation and accepted a lectureship in sociology at the University of Sao Paulo. For the 26 year old, this was a life raft that he clung to like a drowning man, as he himself put it.[37] Yet Lévi-Strauss had more substantive reasons for his journey overseas. Had not Rousseau called upon scholars to become philosophical Herculeses,[38] to chart the "natural, moral, and political history" of distant lands and peoples? And if that happened one day, Rousseau predicted in "On the Origin of Inequality," "then we ourselves would see a new world emerge from their pens and would thus get to know our own world." It is this transatlantic, eurocentric task which Lévi-Strauss takes on. This is why he considers Rousseau to be the

33. Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques*, *op. cit.*, p. 274.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 473; cf. p. 472 — see also the correlation of women with table manners and associated objects as mediators between the individual and the body. *Mythologiques III. L'origine des manières de table* (Paris, 1968), pp. 420-21.

35. Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques*, *op. cit.*, p. 57. Cf. also G. Charbonnier, *Entretiens avec Claude Lévi-Strauss* (Paris, 1961); R. Bellour, "Entretien avec Claude Lévi-Strauss" (1972), in Bellour, Clémont, *op. cit.*, pp. 157-209.

36. Cf. Lévi-Strausss, *Tristes Tropiques*, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-56.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 56.

38. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, "Discours sur l'origin de l'inégalité parmi les hommes," in *Du Contrat Social* and other writings (Paris, 1962), p. 112, quoted in Lévi-Strauss, "Jean-Jacques Rousseau, fondateur des sciences de l'homme," *Anthropologie structural deux*, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

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founder of ethnology and why he almost reveres this preacher of pity.[39] Rousseau had first spoken of the "*charmantes structures*"[40] of nature, and had advised (as Lévi-Strauss quotes approvingly) to "seek the company of nature in order to meditate there on the nature of society."[41]

Montaigne was equally important to Lévi-Strauss' urge to be an anthropologist. In Montaigne's *Essais*, he found in 1935 a goal suited to the longings of a young man tired of civilization: Brazil. In 1560, Montaigne had met three Brazilian Indians in Rouen. He asked one of them about the privileges of their native "kings" and was given the answer: in war, they march in front.[42] Almost 400 years later, Lévi-Strauss was delighted to ask the Nambikwara Indians in Central Brazil the same question. His dreams were even surpassed when he was given, to his utmost surprise, the same answer! Such a constancy, he remarks with admiration, did not exist in the political philosophy of civilized nations.[43]

Lévi-Strauss finds more in Montaigne's work. He also adopts the thematic and methodological inspiration crucial to the humanist: Plutarch became a philosophical model for him just as he had been for the neo-platonic moralist of the 16th century.[44] Montaigne grew up, as was his father's wish, "without whip and tears."[45] Until his entry into the *lycée* at the age of six, he spoke only Latin as his mother tongue. He did learn French in his later life, but never acquired a full command of the second humanist language, Greek; he finally withdrew from political life for a rural-philosophical life-style. In the tower of his castle, he read the translation of Plutarch by Jacques Amyot[46] that had just appeared, and conceived his *Essais* as a sequel to Plutarch's *Moralia*.

Just as Montaigne before him, Lévi-Strauss seeks the dialogue with Plutarch, and quotes Plutarch from Amyot's translation. 1947 marks the appearance of Lévi-Strauss' first substantial book, *Les structures élémentaires de la parenté*, which suggests by its very title that it is meant as a correction and continuation of Emile Durkheim's major work, *Les formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse*. In this early

39. Lévi-Strauss in *Le Monde* (January 21-22, 1979). For reference to Rousseau's pathos of pity, cf. *Anthropologie structurale deux*, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

40. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Oeuvres I* (Pléiade edition) p. 641.

41. Lévi-Strauss, *Anthropologie structurale deux*, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

42. M. de Montaigne, *Essais* I, 31: "Des cannibales" (Paris, 1962), p. 245.

43. Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques*, *op. cit.*, p. 356.

44. For the dominant influence of Plutarch on Montaigne, cf. H. Friedrich, *Montaigne*, second and revised edition (Bern/Munich, 1967), pp. 71-79; Friedrich, however, underrates Neo-Platonism in Plutarch as well as in Montaigne, as R. Schottlaender has remarked ("Plutarchs Einfluß auf Montaigne," paper read at the Department of Romance Philology, Free University of Berlin, Jan. 30, 1985).

45. See Montaigne, *Essais* I, 26: "De l'institution des enfans," *op. cit.*, p. 188; cf. *Essais* II, 4: "A demain les affaires," *ibid.*, p. 398. On the breaks in Montaigne's development, cf. D. M. Frame, *Montaigne's Discovery of Man. The Humanization of a Humanist* (New York, 1955).

46. On the swift and thorough influence of Amyot's translation of Plutarch on the French literature of the 16th and 17th centuries, cf. R. Aulotte, *Amyot et Plutarque. La tradition des Moralia au XVIe siècle* (Geneva, 1965), pp. 256-323.

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work, Lévi-Strauss commends Plutarch[47] for being the first to explain the incest taboo solely on the basis of sociological hypotheses. In *Mythologica* (1964-1971), Lévi-Strauss's ambitious monumental work, Plutarch is finally granted the prominent role of the master. Plutarch's work *On Isis and Osiris* — a platonizing *interpretatio graeca* of Egyptian myths and rites — is quoted especially throughout all four volumes. Even the key words in the titles — "The Raw and the Cooked," "From Honey to Ashes," "Table Manners," "Naked Man" — maybe traced (as with numerous titles in Montaigne's *Essais*) to central themes from Plutarch's *Moralia*.[48] The correspondence goes even further. Just as Montaigne had identified with Plutarch, Lévi-Strauss finds himself confirmed by the classical scholar, although more in an epistemological than in an ethical sense. Plutarch attributes myths to the ancient Egyptians similar to the ones Lévi-Strauss discovered among the South American Indians, and since Plutarch also interprets them as intellectual procedures, Lévi-Strauss considers the credibility of his own method to be beyond doubt. As he assures us with the disarming naiveté of circular reasoning, "we have to admit, therefore, that despite all historical and geographical distances the human mind has always worked in the same way."[49] He stresses that it is unimportant for this finding whether or not the Egyptians really thought the way Plutarch assumed they did. Needless to say, Lévi-Strauss claims the same for his own reasoning on the Indians.

Plutarch's philosophico-theological reading of trans-mediterranean legends about alien gods is a model for Lévi-Strauss' pseudo-analysis of the spirit of trans-atlantic tales: he adopted from Plutarch his reflections on the mirror effect of myths and uses them as a motto in the *Mythologica*: "So you will see now that they are not vague fables nor hollow fictions concocted by poets and other storytellers for their mere pleasure, more or less as spiders spin and weave their webs out of nothing; for it is obvious that they contain incidents and memories of certain troubles. Just as the scientists say that the rainbow is nothing but a phantasm of different colors created through the reflection of our sight against a cloud, so this fable is the appearance of a certain mind which bends and sends our own reason back to the contemplation of some other truth."[50]

The fables therefore reflect a higher truth, and such a use of the Platonic parable of the cave as Plutarch applied to the myths takes on paradigmatic significance for Lévi-Strauss. Consequently, he grants Plutarch the honorary title of a "precursor of structural myth analysis."[51] *Mythologica* culminates in a summary in which Lévi-Strauss accepts, beside himself, only Plutarch. Here he

47. See Lévi-Strauss, *Les structures élémentaires de la parenté*, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

48. A central theme of Plutarch's *Table Conversations* (661-63) is the dietary and ethical differences between raw and cooked food; reflections on clothing and eating rites based on myths are especially dominant in Plutarch's *Greek Questions* (291 E — 304 F).

49. Lévi-Strauss, *Mythologiques II*, *op. cit.*, p. 346.

50. Plutarch, *On Isis and Osiris* 20, 358 A-B, quoted in Lévi-Strauss, *Mythologiques I*, *op. cit.*, p. 289.

51. Lévi-Strauss, *Mythologiques IV*, *op. cit.*, p. 38, n. 1.

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confesses what he has in common with the sage of the doomed and declining classical age — across the millennia and in opposition to all other philosophers. Most of all, he concludes, the myths allow one "to isolate certain strategies of the human mind which have remained so constant over the centuries and so general across huge territories that one may consider them fundamental. If one looks for them in other societies and other areas of spiritual life where one would not have suspected them, these societies will in turn be illuminated in their essence. In all respects, my analysis of the myths of a handful of American tribes contains more sense than all the platitudes and commonplaces concerning mythology which philosophers have produced in the last two-and-a-half-thousand years, with the exception of Plutarch."[52]

For Lévi-Strauss, the structural constitution of sense is based on the premise that "religious facts" have no specificity. This premise is not too enlightening. It can already be found in Plutarch, where it has an explicit theological function: the gods and demons of the myths are in no way different from the phenomena of nature, they are not human inventions but reflections of the divine spirit.[53] But if everything is inspired by one and the same spirit[54] — and this is exactly what structuralism also maintains — then a functionalist division of the world into religious and non-religious facts obviously makes no sense.

Lévi-Strauss attributes this functionalist classification error or untheological dualism, to all former interpreters of myths.[55] Instead of assuming that the same law, order and hierarchy are at work everywhere — in myths, thought and speech, in the soul as in the body, in nature as in culture, in the microcosm as in the macrocosm — earlier exegetes had treated myths as a realm unto themselves. They sought to trace them back to something specifically other, such as primitive feelings or archetypes, celestial bodies or the weather, historical events or personalities, or certain social customs and manners.

The point of Lévi-Strauss' critique of these interpretations is not to accuse them of being reductions. Rather, he condemns them precisely because their reduction is not radical enough and that they settle for an explanation of myths based on a specific *analogon*. Lévi-Strauss credits himself with having understood that myths take part in a continuous chain of analogies which links men and animals with plants and inorganic substances. He is fascinated by the idea that the genetic code works exactly the same as the structures of myths: the same binary oppositions that govern the eye and the brain rule myths.[56] The world consists

52. *Ibid.*, p. 571-72.

53. Cf. Plutarch, *On the Disappearance of the Oracles* 42, 433 D-E (analogy between Apollo and the sun, and between eye and mind).

54. For a critique of Lévi-Strauss's notion of the mind, see E. Fleischmann, "L'esprit humain selon Claude Lévi-Strauss," *Archives européennes de sociologie* 7 (1966), pp. 27-57.

55. Cf. Lévi-Strauss, "La structure des mythes," *Anthropologie structurale*, *op. cit.*, pp. 228-30; see also *Mythologiques I*, *op. cit.*, p. 346.

56. See Lévi-Strauss, *Mythologiques IV*, *op. cit.*, pp. 605, 619; cf. also "L'ethnologue devant la condition humaine," *Le regard éloigné*, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

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only of texts which can be decoded. Every *differentia specifica* has vanished.

But if there are no longer any specific differences, then the issue is settled whether human origins are found in one cause or two. And the human autochthony that so many myths talk about — a sexless creation out of earth — need neither be rejected nor confirmed. Lévi-Strauss once remarked that there is a logically insuperable problem for a society that believes in the autochthony of man: it cannot explain how one can be the result of two, for it does not acknowledge that every one of us was created through the union of man and woman. The Oedipus myth was the attempt to provide a logical tool for the solution of this problem.[57]

Ultimately, structural myth theology points back to its origins in a fact which Lévi-Strauss calls a "scandal": incest.[58] This phenomenon requires specific differences, and its taboo contradicts the idea that everything is necessarily related with everything else. Incest is possible by nature, but in almost all known cultures it has been strictly prohibited. In contrast to the other cultural prohibitions, which vary greatly across time and space, the incest taboo has a quasi-universal quality about it. On the other hand, it is the most highly developed cultures which observe it least strictly. So-called primitives have sharpened their awareness of the danger of incest through sophisticated and highly complicated rules, with more fantasy and acuteness than so-called civilized peoples.

Lévi-Strauss responds to the scandal of incest with the admirable attempt to systematize these prohibitions on a logical basis. The scandal itself, of course, is not abolished but only displaced, the contradictions and specificities of incest beyond that which can be expressed in diagrams are not analyzed. The persistent question for Lévi-Strauss is not, "What is incest?" but rather, "What else is incest beside being incest?" In other words, from the very beginnings he tries to incorporate incest into a *bricolage* and forces it, in surrealist manner, to be something other than what it is.

Only by way of myths does Lévi-Strauss find a satisfying result. Yet they must not be familiar myths, but strange ones, myths that are "indigestible."[59] Despite the less-than-idyllic nature of field work, his disgust of the jungle[60] proved to be an ideal condition for the structuralist drudgeries on myths. After all, you cannot understand myths, Lévi-Strauss warns us, if you are enticed by them.[61]

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57. Cf. Lévi-Strauss, *Anthropologie structurale*, *op. cit.*, p. 239.

58. Lévi-Strauss, *Les structures élémentaires de la parenté*, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

59. Even his own four-volume *Mythologica* — "a myth of mythology" (*Mythologiques I*, *op. cit.*, p. 20) — Lévi-Strauss calls an "unpalatable and confused text" (*ibid.*, p. 40); cf. *Mythologiques IV.*, *op. cit.*, p. 614 where myths are described as "absurd narratives."

60. In the opening of *Tristes Tropiques*, *op. cit.*, Lévi-Strauss summarizes his experience of field work in the phrase: "Adventure has no place in the profession of the ethnographer" (p. 13). What the field worker has to expect instead are disgust, disdain, reprobation, and boredom ("dégoût": pp. 13, 374; "dédain," "réprobation,": 443; "ennui": p. 369).

61. Cf. Lévi-Strauss, *Mythologiques I.*, *op. cit.*, p. 40: "therefore, only the view from the outside grants intelligibility to myths." See Lévi-Strauss, "Réponses à quelques

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Despite and because of the detour to the savages, the reference point for Lévi-Strauss remained the myth of Oedipus. At his first public demonstration of a structuralist dissection of myths in 1955, he sanctimoniously claimed it was a random example which had no other advantage than being known to everyone everyone and not having to be recounted.[62] Since then, however, it has become obvious that Lévi-Strauss did not choose this example without reason. The Oedipus myth, or the elements he isolated in it, recur in all his works. Even on the first try, Lévi-Strauss discovered, with the help of the Oedipus myth, a striking and surrealistic formula for incest. Incest is not just incest but also, and most of all, an "overrated"[63] form of kinship. In this respect it is reassuringly no different from the burial of Polynices through his sister Antigone. In this general form, incest is also comparable with patricide, though in reverse: Oedipus's killing of his father, Laius, Lévi-Strauss suggests to hisastounded audience, is the opposite to

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questions," *op. cit.*, pp. 634, 637. For a discussion and modification of Lévi-Strauss' notion of myth, see L. Sebag, "Le mythe: code et message," *Les Temps Modernes* 20, No. 226 (1965), pp. 1607-23; E. Leach, ed., *The Structural Study of Myth* (1967), especially the essays by Mary Douglas, N. Yalman, and K. O. L. Burridge; G. S. Kirk, *Myth Its Meaning and Functions in Ancient and Other Cultures* (Cambridge/Berkeley/Los Angeles, 1971), pp. 42-83; J. P. Vernant, "Raisons du mythe," in *Mythe et société en Gréce ancienne* (Paris, 1974), pp. 237-43; G. Bernstein, "Structuralism and Romantic Mythmaking," in H. R. Garvin ed., "Phenomenology, Structuralism, Semiology" in *Bucknell Review*, (April 1976), pp. 99-116; A. Horstmann, "Der Mythosbegriff vom frühen Christentum bis zur Gegenwart, VI. Das 20. Jahrhundert," *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte* 23 (1979), pp. 210-11; M. Detienne, "Une mythologie sans illusion," *Le temps de la réflexion* 1 (1980), pp. 27-60; P. Smith, "Positions du mythe," *ibid.*, pp. 83-98. The need for a "distant" position of observation in successful fieldwork and myth-analysis has been re-emphasized by Lévi-Strauss in *Le regard éloigné*, which appeared in 1983. Cf. also R. Schlesier, "Der bannende Blick des Flaneurs im Garten der Mythen," in *Faszination des Mythos. Studien zu antiken und modernen Interpretationen* (Frankfurt, 1985), pp. 35-60.

62. Lévi-Strauss, *Anthropologie structurale*, *op. cit.*, p. 235. Lévi-Strauss illustrates his method of the dissection of myths more thoroughly in "La geste d'Asdiwal," *Anthropologie structurale deux*, *op. cit.*, pp. 175-233, and especially in the four-volume *Mythologiques*. On the problem of the applicability of Lévi-Strauss's method to Greek myths, see P. Pucci, "Lévi-Strauss and Classical Culture," *Arethusa* 4 (1971), pp. 103-17; P. Vidal-Naquet, "Les jeunes. Le cru, l'enfant grec et le cuit," in J. Le Goff and P. Nora, *Faire de l'histoire. Nouveaux objets* (Paris, 1974), pp. 137-68; C. P. Segal, "The Raw and the Cooked in Greek Literature: Structure, Metaphor, Values," *Classical Journal* 69 (1974), pp. 289-308; R. S. Caldwell, "Psychoanalysis, Structuralism, and Greek Mythology," *Bucknell Review* (April 1976), pp. 209-30; M. Detienne, "Mythes grecs et analyse structurale: controverses et problèmes," in B. Gentili and G.Paioni eds., "Il mito greco" in *Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica. Atti di Convegni 1* (Rome 1977), pp. 69-89; *Arethusa* 10 (1977): *Classical Literature and Contemporary Literary Theory*, especially the contributions by C. A. Rubino, J. Peradotto, T. S. Turner; Ada Neschke-Hentschke, "Griechischer Mythos und strukturale Anthropologie," *Poetica* 10, No. 2 (1978), pp. 135-53; W. Burkert, "Griechische Mythologie und Geistesgeschichte der Moderne," in O. Reverdin and B. Grange, *Entretiens sur l'antiquité classique 26, Les études classiques aux XIXe et XXe siècles: Leur place dans l'histoire des idées* (Vandoeuvres-Geneva, 1980), pp. 194-99; K. R. Walters, "Another Showdown at the Cleft Way: An Inquiry into Classicists' Criticism of Lévi-Strauss' Myth Analysis," *Classical World* 77 (1984), pp. 337-51.

63. Lévi-Strauss, *Anthropologie structurale*, *op. cit.*, p. 237.

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an overrated form of kinship, namely an "underrated" one, as is the fratricide of Eteocles and Polynices. Of course, it is totally irrelevant for this terminology whether or not the actors are aware of the real ties of kinship. Autochthony,[64] too, is presumably wrapped up in the kinship package of the Oedipus myth: the name of Oedipus means "swollen foot," and is thus an affirmation of autochthony, while Oedipus's killing of the sphinx is a negation of autochthony, as is the death of the serpent at the hands of Cadmus, Oedipus' ancestor.

When Lévi-Strauss presented this model of interpretation at a conference, he himself characterized it, with a certain coquettishness, as manipulation of a mountebank. Later, he tacitly dropped some of these hypotheses, especially the ones on autochthony, which owed much to interpretations he had criticized. Furthermore, another element of the myth of Oedipus soon attracted his attention: the role of Oedipus in solving the riddle of the Sphinx. This element became attractive for Lévi-Strauss when he discovered its correspondence with the Celtic myths of the Grail. The figure of Perceval in Chrétien de Troyes and in Wolfram von Eschenbach now appeared to him as "Oedipus reversed."[65]

Lévi-Strauss saw a desirable balance between the stories of these two heroes:[66] a question supposed to have no answer (the riddle of the sphinx) is paralleled by an answer which requires a question (the shown Grail). The chastity of the innocent fool corresponds with the unrecognized incest of the wise one who solves the puzzle. This accomodates even chastity and incest in the schema of question and answer: chastity itself corresponds to an "answer without a question," while the incestuous union is analogous to a "question without an answer." Besides, Lévi-Strauss draws a useful lesson from this balancing act: the Oedipus and Grail myths demonstrate that communication between men must be neither too weak nor too intense. Perceval and Oedipus paradigmatically illustrate the moral principle of the mythical stories: "Man must make up his mind to prefer the balance and the periodicity of the seasonal rhythm" to all exaggerations and understatements. It is this rhythm, Lévi-Strauss elaborates, "that fulfills the same function in the order of nature that the matrimonial exchange of women does in the social sphere or the exchange of words in conversation." But this requires that "one practice the one as well as the other with the frank intention to communicate, i.e., without tricks and perversion and most of all without ulterior motives."[67]

In the program notes to the productions of *Parsifal* at the 1975 Bayreuth Festival, Lévi-Strauss characterized the Oedipal and the Perceval myths as illustrations of the "two complementary solutions humans have found for the problem of communication."[68] The merging of the two types of myth in the opera *Parsifal*

64. *Ibid.*, pp. 236-38.
65. Lévi-Strauss, "Le champ de l'anthropologie," *Anthropologie structurale deux*, *op. cit.*, p. 34.
66. *Ibid.*, pp. 31-34.
67. *Ibid.*, p. 35.
68. Lévi-Strauss, "De Chrétien de Troyes à Richard Wagner," *Le regard éloigné*, *op. cit.*, pp. 316-17.

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testified to Wagner's merits as an innovative creator of myths. It is in two motifs from *Parsifal* that Lévi-Strauss finds clear expression of his own theory of myth: "Here, time becomes space."[69]

All structuralist wisdom crystalizes, as it were, in Lévi-Strauss' reverence for Wagner: while he considers Wagner the mythologist in the medium of music, he thinks of himself as the musician[70] in the medium of mythology. He suggests that one has to read a myth the same way a director reads a musical score;[71] and his *Mythologica*, which open with an "overture," end with a "finale," and are divided into sections bearing musical names, he calls a "negative of a symphony."[72] Since childhood he has served, as he proclaims to the revered master and to his own disciples, at the altar of the "god"[73] Wagner. And now, 100 years after the completion of *The Twilight of the Gods* through the god-like artist, Lévi-Strauss believes he has initiated the Twilight of Mankind[74] in his own monumental *Gesamtkunstwerk*. By now humanity may be spirited away[75] — Lévi Strauss' dream of his own divinity has been fulfilled in a socially acceptable way. He had once had this fantasy in Brazil's sultry forests, where he killed time during his desolate expedition by writing a play with the title, *The Apotheosis of Augustus*.[76] In this drama, Augustus' wife, Livia, looks at her husband's deification as the crowning of his career. "So basically: the Académie Française,"[77] is the author's commentary. In 1974, 20 years after he had written this in his journal on the *Tristes Tropiques*, Lévi-Strauss did reach, at the age of 65, this goal of his career: admission into the circle of French immortals.

By now Lévi Strauss' work unmistakably displays those very features with which he praised, in a Dionysian tone, the promising treasures of New York's Museum of Natural history in 1943: "this dithyrambic talent for synthesis, this almost monstrous ability to see similarities where all other men see diversity . . ."[78]

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69. *Ibid.*, p. 301. According to Lévi-Strauss, this is "the most profound definition of myth ever given."

70. Cf. Lévi-Strauss, *Mythologiques IV*, *op. cit.*, pp. 580, 577; and *Mythologiques I*, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

71. Cf. Lévi-Strauss, *Anthropologie structurale*, *op. cit.*, p. 234 and *Mythologiques I*, *op. cit.*, pp. 23, 25-26.

72. Lévi-Strauss, *Mythologiques IV*, *op. cit.*, p. 580.

73. Lévi-Strauss, *Mythologiques I*, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

74. Cf. Lévi-Strauss, *Mythologiques IV*, *op. cit.*, p. 620.

75. To Lévi-Strauss, myths represent a thought without man. Cf. *Mythologiques I*, *op. cit.*, p. 20. The "unconscious" assumed here is "plutôt un inconscient kantien que freudien, un inconscient catégoriel, combinatoire; (. . .) il s'agit bien plutôt d'un système catégoriel sans référence à un sujet pensant; (. . .) aussi bien cet esprit inconscient peut-il être dit homologue à la nature; peut-être même est-il nature" (Paul Ricoeur, "Structure et herméneutique," *Esprit*, 31 [1963], p. 600). Lévi-Strauss adopts Ricoeur's characterization of his philosophy as "kantisme sans sujet transcendental" (*ibid*, p. 618), although not understood as a lack but as an "inevitable consequence of the "ethnographic perspective" (*Mythologiques I*, *op. cit.*, p. 19).

76. See Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques*, *op. cit.*, pp. 436-41.

77. *Ibid.*, p. 438.

78. Lévi-Strauss, *La voie des masques*, *op. cit.*, pp. 12, 14.

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Reviews:

New York Intellectuals

Alan M. Wald, *The New York Intellectuals: The Rise and Decline of the Anti-Stalinist Left from the 1930s to the 1980s* (University of North Carolina Press, 1987), pp. xvi + 440.
Thomas Bender, *New York Intellect: A History of Intellectual Life in New York City, from 1750 to the Beginnings of Our Own Time* (New York: Knopf, 1987), pp. xix + 422.

Twenty years ago James Gilbert published the first substantial study of the New York intellectuals, *Writers and Partisans* [1968]). At the time he received a collegial warning that his scholarly efforts would be wasted: the subject was long dead, advised the experts; no one cared about *Partisan Review* or the New York intellectuals. Today many seem obsessed. New York intellectuals give rise to endless autobiographies, histories, critical analyses, and monographs. Why?

The numerous autobiographies are not difficult to understand. Aging New York intellectuals, looking back over a lifetime of writing and controversies wish to put their cultural estates in order. The vast secondary literature, usually authored by not-so-young New Left professors, is more puzzling. These works are often by authors engaged in re-examining their prospects since European Marxism ceased to dazzle. Younger professors now realize that Lukács and Gramsci did not invent Marxism, and they see that recent European Marxists are hardly incomparable — or reliable — guides. As the European figures appear to shrink, their American counterparts look, if not larger, less small. After all, the New York intellectuals grappled with Marxism, modernism and mass culture; they have something to say.

The generational impulse for these studies is hard to miss. As New Leftists jog, walk or thicken into middle age, they (we!) reconsider the forerunners, the intellectual parents. With renewed appreciation greying New Leftists look to the New York intellectuals for clues on preserving a radical vision through careers, middle age and beyond. To be sure, most New York intellectuals became conservatives. Nevertheless, even as negative models, they might provide lessons about the difficulties of remaining a radical in America; at least, more

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might be learned by evaluating their lives than Lukács', or Althusser's. Moreover, like Irving Howe, some New York intellectuals remained radicals, which makes them especially fit for study. Indeed, the re-appraisal of Howe indexes the new mood; once he was an anathema to New Leftists. Now there is a grudging and increasing respect from the fact that he has stayed a socialist — no little achievement when every year more middle-aged New Leftists have "second thoughts."

These motives mark Alan Wald's ambitious tome, *The New York Intellectuals*.[1] Wald wants to recapture a suppressed and forgotten phase of the New York intellectuals, characterized by their "anti-Stalinist revolutionary communism," and to understand how these intellectuals were so easily integrated into American society. He proposes to forcefully remind younger Leftists that anti-Stalinism itself does not necessarily lead to conservatism; failing to understand this, Left scholars romanticize the 1930s Stalinist Communist Party and slight the Trostkyist anti-Stalinists. Wald hopes also to "allay the process of deradicalization that eventually overtakes almost all whose lives are based in institutions of teaching . . . during conservative periods."

For these laudatory ends Wald shows unbounded confidence and devotion. He is much impressed with his own importance and political boldness. He puts his cards on the table. "My sympathies are with Marxist commitment." He will be ruthlessly attacked and maligned, he tells us; some will "dismiss the author's perspective by stamping it with a simplistic political label that elides the subtlety of the argument." To suggest his subtleties he indicates his political-theoretical allegiances: *New Left Review* Trotkyism and some of the *Review*'s more misleading works.

Wald's energy, at least, is beyond challenge. The book's acknowledgments run five pages, and include scores of libraries and archives, many hundreds of people, and several foundations and assistants. Wald has been everywhere and asked everyone. And the book shows it; the almost four hundred pages are stuffed with facts. Wald has unearthed neglected people and forgotten incidents. He has also assembled a trove of photographs. His is a labor of love, a virtual encyclopedia of. . . what? Not exactly of New York intellectuals. American Trotskyists cause Wald's pulse to race, his brow to sweat. His is the first study of New York intellectuals, and probably the last, that includes long discussions of James Cannon, George Novack and other less than scintillating minds of American Trotskyism. Cannon, a New York intellectual? Even Wald admits

1. Disclosure alert: Alan Wald reviewed my book, *The Last Intellectuals*, in *Radical Historians Newsletter* Number 55 (May 1988) — an unpleasant little review. I would have been sorely tempted to blast his book but, of course, was constrained by the book reviewer's code of ethics. However, ethical conflicts never surfaced. My review was commissioned by *Telos* and completed long before I had seen or suspected Wald's review. It gathered static on my disks, while I dilly-dallied with other things. I am prepared to swear to the truth of this in any court — revolutionary, tennis or basketball — of Professor Wald's choosing.

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his theoretical knowledge was restricted to "the basics of Marxism" and that he distrusted intellectuals. He plunges on. "There are several aspects of his life about which little is known. Among these are his relationship to his mother."

Wald seems to know about every postcard sent to Trotsky, every subscriber to Trotskyist newspapers, every Trostkyist thought or inclination that fluttered in the breeze. "Felix Morror had been secretly reading the Trotskyist newspaper, the *Militant* for some time," Wald informs a skeptical world. The most minor Trotskyists receive at least a sentence. "Laura Gray, born Laura Slobe in Chicago in 1910, had a brief career as an avant-garde painter. . . then devoted the last ten years of her short life to drawing naturalist cartoons . . . for the *Militant*." That's it for Miss Slobe-Gray.

Wald details the life and thinking of Trotkyists and sympathizers but illuminates little of New York intellectuals. This is not all bad. Many Trotskyists played important political roles, some vitalized intellectual life. However, their lives usually overshadowed their ideas or contributions. For instance, consider Felix Morrow, born Mayorwitz, caught reading *The Militant*. A student of Sidney Hook, he joined the Communist Party and then the Trotskyist Socialist Worker's Party. Jailed with a score of Trotskyists in 1941 for violating the Smith Act, he developed differences with SWP leadership, leading to his expulsion in 1946. "You can't expel me," he protested, "I'll live and die in the movement!" (Wald is good on details like this.) "Party members in the audience saw that there were tears in his eyes." Not for long. Morrow became a cold warrior and a successful publisher. Shaken by the book *Flying Saucers have Landed* [1953], Morrow joined the UFO "movement" and founded a lucrative occult book company.

As a compendium of information on Trotskyists, the book is a gold mine; as an analysis of New York intellectuals it is largely slag. By page 100, and a chapter on philosophers and revolutionaries, New York intellectuals only appear in the supporting cast. Wald writes that in the mid-30s the pressure of events forced a distinction "between those intellectuals who were willing to make a serious, long-term organization commitment to revolutionary politics and those whose engagement with Marxism was becoming subordinated to the pursuit of their personal and professional lives." Guess whom Professor Wald prefers? Not the New York intellectuals. He launches into the story of the Trotskyist Communist League of America (CLA) and those who were in or close to it.

He regularly splices into his account some more conventional New York intellectuals. For instance, V.F. Calverton edited *Modern Monthly*, the undistinguished predecessor to *Partisan Review*. Any links to Trotskyism? While Calverton professed to support Stalin, the Communists suspected deviation. "Believing that Calverton's work and activities in some manner gave support to the ideas of the Trotskyists and other dissidents . . . the party . . . printed . . . articles attacking him as a fascist . . . As a result, Calverton opened his pages to Trostkyists and Lovestoneites. . . ." This is not much. Wald's methodology seems identical to an uncle in my family, a Commmunist in the 30s. "Anyone

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not with us," he recalls, "we attacked as Trotskyites." Of course, not all his cases are so tangential as Calverton: *Partisan Review* and Dwight Macdonald toyed with Trotsky. And for others, like Irving Howe, Trotskyism had a lasting impact. Yet here a real ailment of this book surfaces. Even when Wald has a legitimate case and subject, he is supremely uninteresting, usually only a half step away from Marxist platitudes. What he says of *Partisan Review* differs little from what the Trotskyists said about it in the 30s. The *Review* had refused to subordinate itself to Trotskyist leadership, which angered the American Trotskyist journal *Socialist Appeal*; the editors charged that by creating a "small cultural monastery" distant from the working class political struggles, *Partisan Review* succumbed to aestheticism. What are Wald's criticisms? The same. He charges that *Partisan Review* abandoned popular working class culture. "It overreacted to vulgarized Marxism by assigning high culture its virtually exclusive center of interest." He adds, "This approach, of course, contradicted Trotsky's views."

Wald even spins the oldest standard in the Marxist criticism collection; while *Partisan Review* opposed WWII, "it presented no corresponding working-class program of action to prevent the war," as if a program of working class action in *Partisan Review* would demonstrate anything but advanced delusions. Wald chugs along with facts and little sketches of Trotskyists — sometimes intriguing — but his ideas spring from back issues of *The Militant*. Everywhere Wald defends Trostky and the Correct Line.

In the flood of facts, it is easy to forget that Wald nowhere convincinly shows that the New York intellectuals passed through a stage of "anti-Stalinist revolutionary communism," which they later denied or covered up. He admits this on a case-to-case basis, but does not surrender his general argument. For instance, he tells us that Edmund Wilson's radicalization was "profound" in the 1930s but his actual political involvement "brief and without depth." By 1933 he withdrew from all organizations "and for the remainder of the decade he devoted himself to a study of the ideas of communism." In 1982 William Barrett referred to himself as a former "Marxist with a Trotskyist orientation." Outraged, Wald quickly reviews Barrett's writings to demonstrate Barrett knows nothing of Marxism. It is doubtful, Wald huffs, "that Barrett understands, or ever understood, the basic Trotskyist critique of Stalinism." So much for the revolutionary anti-Stalinism of New York intellectuals.

The criticism of the conservatives as well as socialists like Howe is hardly compelling because Wald's own approach derives from vintage Scientific Marxism. He objects to the excessive moralism of Howe's socialism, the "divestment of a scientific approach." Moral judgments "tend to be subjective and relativistic, obscuring the objective reasons for the critique of capitalism and the necessity of its transformation." His criticism of the New York intellectuals' retreat to conservativism sounds like an article from *The Militant*: the New Yorkers lack a scientific theory of society and "militant anger against domestic racism and class exploitation."

Wald is consistently uninteresting and unoriginal on almost any subject; he

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parades his Leftism, his belief in complexity and dialectics, but his commentary is simplistic, his analysis unilluminating. The strength of the book is only the empirical research, mainly the facts about second-string Trostkyist intellectuals, their contributions and fate. Because Wald is one more English professor who cannot write, the book is also unreadable; it should be consulted by way of the index.

While Wald's grating and tendentious book offers few pleasures, Bender's is the opposite — almost to a fault; it goes down easy. The phrases and themes all sound important — civic culture, democracy, metropolitan sensibility — but the whole never crystallizes. Bender is on to something, but even as three related essays, which is how he describes the book, it is not quite clear what. Nevertheless, diffuseness is no crime; and if there is less to say about Bender than about Wald, this is not because his book is inferior. The opposite is true; it is thoughtful, sometimes engaging; but like an interesting and meandering lecture, it elicits vague assent and appreciation, not vigorous support or rebuttal.

Its scope is much larger than Wald's; here are New York intellectuals from "1750 to the beginnings of our own time." Bender identifies three "distinct cultures of intellectual life" in New York, which "succeeded each other, the perceived failure of one prompting the next." These are "Civic," "Literary" and "Academic" intellectual cultures. Each stands in a complicated relation to "the idea of democratic intellect," Bender's recurring theme. Bender seeks to "generate compelling general ideas about New York as a democratic city."

He doesn't. Through mini-biographies and accounts of New York learned societies and schools he loosely recounts the story of professionalization and the democratic efforts to resist it. While it is wise not to impose a scheme on recalcitrant material, Bender is too content with a hazy tale. Nonetheless the story is a good one; Bender concludes that universities have displaced or strangled the metropolitan ideal of intelligence. "If cities need universities, so the academy, if it is to avoid the fate of the dinosaur, desperately needs the intellectual, artistic, and political provocations of a vibrant metropolitan culture." To be sure, Bender always qualifies away any of his more ringing statements. Moreover, any book in the 1980s that closes with buzzphrases calling for "excellence in principle and in practice" cannot be completely trusted.

Bender first, and briefly, considers individuals of the late 18th century who encouraged an urban and secular culture, founders of King's College and the Friendly Club, a society for intellectual improvement. He identifies these "civic" reformers as humanists devoted to practical improvement. Divisions between high and low or commercial and artistic culture were unknown to the civic reformers. Nevertheless, civic culture was patrician, and excluded a growing force in the city, artisans and mechanics. "The dream of a widely accepted civic culture under patrician auspices was crumbling into two partial cultures"— a professional and artisan. "One culture or two? On what terms could one culture be sustained?" This conflict branded the founding of the University of the City of New York (today NYU, where Bender teaches) and

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Cooper Union (for the Advancement of Science and Art).

After this phase, Bender characterizes a period running from the early part of the 19th to the mid-20th centuries as distinguished by a new literary culture, a professionalization separating "literary and artistic discourse from the common life and language of democratic society." Perhaps, but Bender's arguments are so lax and the time period so broad that everything is included; this hundred and thirty years saw both new democratic intellectuals and a new anti-democratic elite; both the *Knickerbocker Magazine* circle that "stood for the ideal of the gentleman litterateur" and the "young American" group devoted to a new nationalist and democratic literature. It runs from James Fenimore Cooper to Edmund Wilson; it is not even clear what separates this period from the preceding one of "civic culture."

Indeed a better case can be made that the Jacksonian and cultural democrats were historically new, but for Bender the rise of a new elite literary species brands the period. He also identifies a new intellectual type, "the metropolitan gentry," which is "formed by literary culture" but reaches beyond it — professional journalists like George William Curtis and urban reformers like Frederick Law Olmsted. This may be true enough, but Bender seems to frequently forget what he is arguing; or the argument is so diffuse that everything fits. Using Herbert Croly as a model, he dates the emergence of "the modern literary intellectual" at the end of century; and he moves over very familiar turf of the "young intellectuals" from Randolf Bourne to Edmund Wilson.

The modern literary intellectual differs from the earlier literary or civic or reform intellectuals, but Bender hardly captures the specific shift. Moreover, as usual, Bender judiciously covers all bases. Wilson was a New York intellectual, but was "never" a "genuinely metropolitan intellectual." He despised the university, but excessively. "The point, here, is not to make an argument for the intellectual as academic. On the contrary, it is to suggest the value to both literary intellectuals and academic intellectuals of somewhat more sympathetic interaction."

The last section deals with the rise of "academic" culture by surveying Columbia University's evolution into an elite institution, as well as resistance to it by Beard, Dewey, and those at the New School of Social Research. At first Columbia sought to engage "the social diversity and cultural richness of the city in an open way"; later "the authority of university expertise" displaced the weakened urban relationship. In Bender's less than stirring words, "The history of the formative years of Columbia University is, then, a contest between, on the one hand, dialogue and conversation and, on the other hand, autonomy and authority." Under Butler, Columbia became inhospitable to public intellectuals. Nevertheless through Trilling, Hofstadter and Mills the older Dewey/Beard model on metropolitan engagement persisted.

Only by page 321, with some twenty pages of text remaining, does Bender reach those whom Wald and others usually identify as the New York intellectuals. He has an emphatic point to make — the much celebrated New York

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intellectuals generally ignored what gave New York its post-war cultural accedence: painting, sculpture, photography, architecture, music and especially dance. For Bender this suggests that there were two worlds, "one focused on the word, the other concerned with images and sounds." More than prose separated these two groups: the wordy and political New York intellectuals were a "downtown" group; others like Lincoln Kirstein were wealthy uptowners or Bostonians. To confuse his already confusing categories Bender describes these wealthier and arty individuals as "civic intellectuals."

Unfortunately, these final points about the wordy nonvisual New York intellectuals are not developed — perhaps because Harold Rosenberg, Clement Greenberg and Meyer Shapiro, all identified with the visual arts, might undermine the case. In any event it is as if Bender came to these thoughts while completing his writing, since they apply as much to his own book as to the New York intellectuals: he barely attends to art, music and dance. If New York cultural life ends in deadened universities and irrelevant intellectuals, than his own book would have to be radically rethought. Nevertheless *New York Intellect* raises pertinent issues about the progressive decay of urban cultural life.

Russell Jacoby

Music, Postmodernism, and Critical Theory

Richard Leppert and Susan McClary, eds., *Music and Society: The Politics of Composition, Performance and Reception* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 202 pp.

Leppert and McClary's anthology is a welcome addition to the pitifully small shelf of books which take the socio-political content of music seriously. From the musical number mysticism of Pythagoras, through romantic aestheticism, to contemporary positivism, the dominant Western conceptions have severed the links between music and social life. The notion that literature, drama, and film both reflect and shape their social contexts has gradually secured a niche in the mainstream of humanistic disciplines. Still lacking this fundamental and indispensible notion, mainstream musicology relentlessly pursues the new number mysticism of positivist analyses of musical texts, often framed by accounts of composers' "lives and times" which have no intrinsic

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relation to the musical artworks themselves. Daunted by the arcane character of this apparently nonrepresentational art, scholars from other disciplines have been reticent to fill the deficits in the socio-political understanding of musical phenomena.

Of course, the towering exception to this state of musicological affairs is Adorno. In some of this volume's essays, the debt to Adorno is readily apparent. In others his influence looms beneath the surface. Yet it is an Adorno refracted through the disintegrating tendencies of postmodernism. At times this is merely a matter of the grating jargon of postmodernist authenticity: i.e., situations are not discussed and analyzed, but "thematized" and "problematized." But the postmodernist appropriation of Adorno also touches matters of fundamental theoretical importance. There is less discussion of critical theory, and more of semiotics, deconstruction, and feminism. There is less analysis of musical theory, philosophy, or ideology, and more of musical discourse. There is less of a focus on class, and more on gender, race, and ethnicity. There is less of a preoccupation with the so-called "classical" canon, and more on a plurality of musics. It is ironic that the comprehensive and integrating tendencies of critical theory — even in the iconoclastic version of Adorno's negative dialectics — are most apparent when its component elements are separated out and pursued as the foundations for discrete lines of research.

Unified only by postmodernist perspectives on the relationship of music to society, the essays are diverse: from Bach to rock, British cultural chauvinism to Chopin, male hegemony to Memorex reproducibility. But whatever their subject, each addresses the implications of and alternatives to the prevailing orthodoxy of the autonomy of music. Janet Wolff's foreword traces the history of the idea of autonomous art generally and autonomous music specifically. For Wolff, the fact that music without words or lyrics is apparently nonrepresentational presents no special difficulties. The techniques for socio-political analysis that have been developed for the other arts can be applied to music as well. Leppert and McClary's introduction, however, takes a different perspective on the issue of autonomy. The editors agree with Wolff that music is inherently social, but they argue that the unique character of music requires the use of special analytic techniques. The fact that these discussions of method also pervade the six other essays gives this book a heightened sense of methodological self-consciousness — as it also testifies to the continued backwardness of musicological research.

McClary's "The Blasphemy of Talking Politics during Bach Year" examines the politics of Bach's reception during the recent (1985) tri-centenary of the composer's birth. Like Adorno's classic essay written on the occasion of the bicentennial of Bach's death, McClary's first task is to rescue Bach from his over-zealous devotees. McClary shows that the attempt to exempt 18th century music generally and Bach specifically from any socio-political influence is part of an effort to heroize and glorify the newly emergent bourgeoisie/German national culture. McClary challenges this image in her analyses of two

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works. In stark contrast to the depictions of the absolute and autonomous composer, McClary demonstrates how society and politics permeate Bach's tonality, musical form, instrumentation, national style, religious sensibility, and gender projection. Here McClary's essay is fully in accord with Adorno.

In her conclusion, McClary moves beyond demystification to deconstruction, beyond Adorno to postmodernism. Unlike Adorno, who grounded the composer politically in order to articulate the genuine dimensions of autonomy and transcendence in Bach's works, McClary dispenses with the notions of Bach's autonomy and transcendence entirely. If Bach's music is nothing more than the product of the conflicting tendencies of his troubled times, then there is no reason to exalt it above the contemporary works of the postmodern composers of our troubled times. Ultimately, McClary's Bach "clearly exhibits characteristics of the postmodern eclectic, of the ideologically marginalized artist empowering himself to appropriate, reinterpret, and manipulate to his own ends the signs and forms of dominant culture." (62) McClary's thorough historical relativization has implications not only for the proper interpretation and performance of Bach's works. Its most important effect is to legitimate contemporary postmodern music now denigrated by the dominant interpretation of the autonomous musical canon.

Eclecticism is also an issue in Leppert's "Music, Domestic Life and Cultural Chauvinism: Images of British Subjects at Home in India." The methodological eclecticism of postmodernist research is perhaps best exemplified by Leppert's analysis of 18th and 19th century portraits of British residents in India which include visual references to music. Leppert treats these portraits as systems of signs which simultaneously reveal and conceal the economic, racial, and gender relations of British imperialism. References to music and music-making are crucial to the interpretation of these serene, apparently inoffensive representations of domestic tranquility. By interpreting these references to music in light of 18th century theoretical assertions of the perfection and universality of Western music, Leppert argues that the pictorial presence of a piano or harpsichord not only symbolizes but legitimates British rule. This rule is not only a matter of superior British force, i.e., the sheer expense and difficulty of transporting one of these large instruments from Europe to India is an exhibition of the triumph of British will. It is also a triumph of Western reason and culture over Oriental backwardness, irrationalism, and superstition. The instrument itself thus epitomizes the power and responsibility of "the white man's burden."

Rose Rosengard Subotnik's "On Grounding Chopin" is the most ambitious attempt at socio-political analysis in this volume. In her survey of several of Chopin's piano works, Subotnik takes on the kind of nonrepresentational, nonprogrammatic, instrumental music which appears to be beyond the ken of any socio-political approach. In contrast to the developmental style of his classical predecessors, and like the later romantic style of several of his

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contemporaries, Subotnik characterizes Chopin's piano works as constituted by a succession of relatively self-contained musical fragments. Subotnik associates this fragmentary compositional style with 19th century pessimism about progress and the universal rationality of science, and the subsequent turn to a more narrowly positivistic, aestheticist, and proto-existentialist outlook on life.

Adorno would concur with Subotnik's description of the transition from classical development to romantic fragmentation. But Subotnik departs from Adorno and thus reveals her postmodernist sympathies in her refusal to valorize the classical developmental style. For Subotnik, musical romanticism is not inferior to classicism, but merely different. As in McClary's essay, Subotnik's historical relativism has the postmodernist tendency of abolishing the notion of a history of Western music in favor of a conception of a multiplicity of Western musics. Subotnik's unwillingness to specify the socio-political causes and correlates of the transition from cultural optimism to cultural pessimism, from compositional development to compositional stasis is disappointing. Still, her analysis is instructive, and her introductory excursus on the problems of autonomy and method is most insightful.

Adorno once wrote that "it is far more difficult to see why one popular song is a hit and another a flop than why Bach finds more of an echo than Telemann, and a Haydn symphony more than a piece by Stamitz."[1] Simon Frith's "Towards an Aesthetic of Popular Music" takes on this challenge of developing evaluative standards for pop music by reversing — in typical postmodernist fashion — one of the most cherished notions of both orthodox and Adornian musicology. Instead of the accepted associations of serious music with socio-political transcendence and of popular music with socio-political determination, Frith locates the value of the best pop songs precisely in the degree to which they are able to transcend their social foundations. Here, once again, postmodernism reveals its relativizing tendencies. If both serious and popular music are socially determined yet capable of transcendence, then there is no unbridgeable gulf between the two traditions. There is, rather, a plurality of simultaneously determined and transcending musics.

Frith's search for an aesthetics of pop music begins not with the authenticity of the performer-producer, but in the ways that pop songs construct their listeners. Frith maintains that pop music performs four social functions for its listeners. These can be briefly characterized as identity formation, emotional management, temporal memory, and cultural possession. An aesthetic of pop music, therefore, lies in the development of standards by which one could evaluate how a particular pop song fulfills these constructive social functions. Frith's conclusion briefly outlines four elements which might constitute these aesthetic standards: rhythmic intensity (derived from Afro-American forms

1. Theodor W. Adorno, *Introduction to the Sociology of Music*, trans. by E. B. Ashton (New York: Seabury Press, 1976), p. 3.

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and conventions), vocal tone, genre analysis, and social usage. While Frith's lists of social functions and popular aesthetic standards are suggestive, the ultimate test of their utility would seem to lie in their ability to organize concrete empirical research on popular music.

The final two essays in this volume are the most problematic. John Shepherd's "Music and Male Hegemony" is the most extreme example of feminist analysis of music. His argument goes something like this: 1) Timbre is that element of music which is least amenable to notational control in musical scores. 2) The notational aspect of musical scores engages the visual rather than aural sense. 3) The sense of vision is inherently masculine and control oriented, while the ability to hear is feminine and openly receptive. Two major conclusions flow from this argument. On the one hand, "the existence of music, like the existence of women, is potentially threatening to men to the extent that it (sonically) insists on the social relatedness of human worlds and as a consequence implicitly demands that individuals respond." (158) On the other hand, Shepherd posits the *possible* existence of a timbre oriented, sonically receptive, and therefore feminine music.

Shepherd's conclusions are problematic. What exactly is the status of the "potential threat" posed to men by women and music? Do men huddle in fear of the brilliant timbre of the Chicago Symphony brass? Or is this merely an example of a feminist analysis which has been pushed to such an extreme that it has lost all connection to life? Similarly, what does timbre-emancipated, feminine music sound like? Shepherd, with due reservations, casts some longing glances at "the musics of black Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America." (163) This is merely emotional neo-romanticism posing as hyper-rationalistic postmodernism. Does the demystification and deconstruction of musical high culture actually require us to ascribe superior aesthetic virtue to the musics of the wretched and oppressed? Unlike the essays by McClary, Leppert, and Frith, where a sensitivity to gender issues is part of a broader analysis, Shepherd's radical feminism is an extreme apriority, which forces musical phenomena to fit an untenable theoretical straitjacket. Perhaps what is needed in this case is more deconstruction, not in the sense of more Lacan and Derrida, but more in the spirit of Marx and Engels's *The German Ideology* and *The Poverty of Philosophy*, where theoretical extravagance was checked by reference to the concrete parameters of life.

The complexity of Shepherd's piece pales before that of John Mowitt's "The Sound of Music in the Era of Its Electronic Reproducibility." The essay opens with an extended "phenomenological" analysis of the "is it live or is it Memorex?" television ad. Like many analyses in the phenomenological tradition, Mowitt's is so attuned to minutiae that it attains complete obscurity. In any case, as the essay title suggests, Ella Fitzgerald and Chuck Mangione's guest shot is merely an elaborate introduction to a Benjamin-inspired examination of the effects of contemporary reproduction techniques on the listening experience.

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Mowitt recognizes the corporate domination of electronic reproduction technologies. Despite this domination, and in contrast to Adorno's pessimism about the technological reproduction of art, Mowitt concludes that these technologies have established the preconditions for a new "structure of listening," where listening emerges from the hegemony of the sense of sight, and where this newly emergent listening is somehow communal-collective in character.

The route from the Memorex vignette to Mowitt's conclusion, whatever it means, is truly scenic. Phenomenology, Freudian psychology, Maurice Halbwachs' book on memory, the Benjamin-Adorno debate on artistic reproduction, Attali's *Noise*, contemporary critical theory, Foucault, and cyberneticist "bits" and "binary fragments" are among the theoretical stops along the way. In a 24 page essay, one might describe this as a *tour de force* of postmodernist theoretical synthesis. Or one might simply say that some postmodernists need to rediscover the old and valuable "structure of intelligible writing."

It is unfortunate that the weakest essays in this book are the last ones. These notwithistanding, the book as whole rightfully belongs in the vanguard of contemporary research on music. Yet the weaknesses of some of these essays should also be taken seriously. They are indicative of what has been lost in the transition from classical critical theory to postmodernism.

In comparison to postmodernist research, the classical work of the Frankfurt School now appears as the product of a golden age of innocence. For the Frankfurt School, preliminary reflections on method provided an integrated yet flexible framework for substantive studies in the humanities and social sciences. Along with this framework, there was a sense of the direction of Western history, and a concomitant foundation for practical political value judgments. This sense of history, this normative foundation provided some measure of direction for the political radicalism of the 60s and early 70s.

More than any overt political event, it is the disintegrating and relativizing tendencies of postmodernism which have effectively negated the radical impulses of critical theory. Objecting to the implicit metaphysics of the Frankfurt School's vision of history, postmodernism has flattened history into a succession of one damn thing after another. Objecting to the European-centered high culture bias of critical theory, postmodernism has achieved the most thorough relativization of culture: a music for every people, and for every people their music!

Postmodernism does have a practical political vision. Despite the progressive self-consciousness of many of its practitioners, this is no longer the radical political vision of the 60s. With its flattened sense of history, with its more optimistic assessment of technology and pop culture, and with its hyper-sensitivity to gender, ethnic, and racial groupings, postmodernism finds its true political home in the left wing of the American Democratic Party. Long gone is the dream of the unity of radical theory and practice. In its place are the innocuous pieties of the rainbow coalition.

John Bokina

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The Rationality of Traditions

Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988).

"In philosophy . . . to know how to begin is the most difficult task of all." (401) In *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* MacIntyre argues that rational enquiry can only begin from the vantage of a relationship to some specific past. Individuals reason and judge not as disembodied minds, apart from and prior to social relations, but as tradition-bound members of a particular community — born and raised into an already structured, culturally specific life-world. This cultural milieu serves as an immense pool of background knowledge, a common stock of socially-shared beliefs which individuals consciously or unconsciously draw upon in developing theoretical constructs.

In *After Virtue*,[1] MacIntyre claimed that 17th and 18th century Enlightenment philosophy took a wrong turn in ignoring the relevance of this basic precondition for all theoretical discourse which Michael Polanyi called the "tacit dimension." Thus Descartes suggested that by "scientifically" disengaging oneself from the cultural context and adopting a detached, third-person viewpoint, all that is unquestioned can become explicit. Only then can individuals become masters of their own destiny and transcend slavish dependence on traditional authority. The Cartesian call to reason "as such" (universally applicable to all people at all times in all places) and the concomitant association of all tradition with obscurantism and dogmatism became powerful moral injunctions which continue to exert great influence today.

MacIntyre reclaims the importance of the "tacit dimension" — the fundamental status of people as culturally-rooted beings within a given tradition. This need not imply that traditions and the cultural roles defined within them are forever etched in stone, that individuals are incapable of criticizing the injustices that may come with their traditions. On the contrary, MacIntyre insists that a tradition can be strengthened through critical dialogue. A tradition, he proposes, ". . . is an argument extended through time in which certain fundamental agreements are defined and redefined in terms of two kinds of conflict: those with critics and enemies external to the tradition who reject all or at least key parts of those fundamental agreements, and those internal, interpretative debates through which the meaning and rationale of the fundamental agreements come to be expressed and by whose progress a tradition is constituted." (12) The relations between individuals and a tradition can thus

1. Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984, 2nd edition).

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range from unproblematic allegiance, through attempts to amend the tradition, to opposition to what have hitherto been its fundamental contentions. A tradition's rationality, argues MacIntyre, is proportional to its willingness to acknowledge the possibility of its own defeat over these fundamental agreements; ". . . only those whose tradition allows for the possibility of its hegemony being put in question can have rational warrant for asserting such hegemony." (388)

Truly rational debate, however, is rational only according to the standards of a given tradition and not in terms of some abstract universal standard. Given many traditions, we must speak of rationalities rather than rationality, of moralities and justices rather than morality and justice. Here MacIntyre seems to come close to a currently fashionable school of thought within post-"linguistic turn" philosophy (personified by, among others, Foucault, Derrida and Rorty) which also questions the very possibility of a notion of reason that can provide a neutral, universal, tradition-independent standard of rational judgment. This apparent similarity, however, is only superficial. Modern day "post-philosophy" philosophers, inspired by a selective reading of Nietzsche, heap scorn on attempts to develop a more viable account of rationality, and insist that "reason" can be nothing more than a masquerade concealing both the irrational grounding of all concepts and beliefs and the will to power which generates them. MacIntyre will have none of this nihilistic relativism. He argues that contemporary neo-Nietzscheans who pretend to have escaped from the clutches of Enlightenment philosophy have instead become its mirror image. Ironically, they have fallen into tacit agreement with their Enlightenment adversaries on the question of rationality, mistakenly assuming that *either* there are universal, tradition-neutral standards for evaluating truth claims *or* that the very idea of reason is a chimera.

MacIntyre attempts to develop an alternative account of rationality which transcends this sterile objectivist-relativist opposition. But given his strong claim that all standards of evaluation are internal to particular traditions which may be mutually incommensurable, how can he himself escape relativistic conclusions? How can the proponents of one tradition rationally evaluate the truth claims of a rival tradition without reducing the latter to its own set of standards, thus doing injustice to the rival's integrity?

But this way of formulating the question already presupposes certain problematic notions about tradition. The question implicitly suggests that the cultural horizons of traditions are fixed and unchangeable, serving as prison walls preventing participants from ever truly coming in contact with the adherents of a rival tradition. MacIntyre in contradistinction sees traditions as fluid, flexible types of discourse having boundaries which are neither rigidly, permanently structured nor irrevocably demarcated from other forms of discourse. The horizons of a tradition are in flux because of the capacity of its most gifted adherents for creative thought and conceptual innovation, allowing them, under certain historical conditions, to make rational contact even

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with members of rival, incommensurable traditions. MacIntyre's account recalls Gadamer's notion of the possibility of a "fusing of horizons" between different and previously antagonistic discourses. While one can never completely leap out of the web of understandings and practices that make up one's own lifeworld, those who possess both the requisite creative capacity for intellectual innovation and the courage to call into question established belief and practice are able to shift the boundaries of their own tradition in their interpretive encounters with other lifeworlds.

The creative thinking required for finding such a point of contact with previously incommensurable rivals is more likely to emerge when a tradition falls into "epistemological crisis," when the tradition appears, by its own standards of progress, to be seriously stalled. Contradictions within the tradition's own conceptual framework, which may have been identified long before the start of the crisis phase, now become imposing obstacles to the tradition's very survival. If the beleaguered tradition's most adept protagonists are able to admit the seriousness of the crisis, they may attempt to transcend the established thought as defined by their tradition and develop alternatives from within. Or, if alternative frameworks already exist on the outside, they may look to these for solutions to their tradition's failing condition. One cannot of course assume that a critical encounter with a rival will help a tradition's protagonists resuscitate their own *Weltanschauung*. Indeed, contact with a conceptually richer and more resourceful rival may provide adherents with good reasons for abandoning ship and transferring their allegiances.

Upon what are these "good reasons" based? MacIntyre has written elsewhere that what really constitutes the rational superiority of one *Weltanschauung* over another ". . . is its ability to transcend the limitations of that other by providing from its own point of view a better explanation and understanding of the failures, frustrations and incoherences of the other point of view (failures, frustrations and incoherences, that is, as judged by the standards internal to that other point of view) than that other point of view can give of itself, in such a way as to . . . give a better historical account, a more adequate and intelligible true narrative of that other point of view . . . than it can provide for itself."[2] The transfer of allegiance from one tradition to another need not occur, in other words, as an irrational leap of faith.

MacIntyre's case against knee-jerk relativism is complicated by caveats and qualifications. He admits, for example, that in certain historical periods relativistic scenarios are imaginable and may indeed be unavoidable. When two distinct communities coexist with each lacking knowledge of the other and neither being confronted with epistemological crisis, there will be no perceived need on either side to attempt to understand the other's point of view.

2. Alasdair MacIntyre, "The Relationship of Philsophy to its Past," in *Philosophy in History*, R. Rorty, S. Schneewind & Q. Skinner, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 47.

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No common points of reference will develop at the level of *Weltanschauung*. This possibility of a certain kind of relativism over a period of time seems necessary if MacIntyre is to hold on to his historicist, tradition-constituted notion of rationality. Yet in maintaining this conception he refuses, unlike Foucault or Rorty, to throw overboard the idea of truth. And it is easy to understand why. His polemical aim, after all, is to argue for the "true account of justice and practical rationality" found in the tradition running from Aristotle to Aquinas and beyond, a moral scheme in which justice means the rewarding of what is deserving within a community committed to the pursuit of the good life. MacIntyre claims that those who have thought their way through the topics of justice and rationality from the standpoint of this tradition ". . . have every reason at least so far to hold that the rationality of their tradition has been confirmed in its encounters with other traditions . . ." (403)

If justice and rationality are linked to particular, historically-rooted social forms, as MacIntyre suggests, why then should Aristotelian ethics, formulated 2500 years ago, be relevant today? MacIntyre argues that Aristotelianism is a flexible tradition that has changed over time in response to criticism. His own criticism attempts to show how one can remain Aristotelian in spirit while subjecting Aristotle's thought to a modern critique of unjust inequality and domination. MacIntyre's immanent critique, then, is an attempt to save Aristotle from Aristotle. He explains that Aristotle supported his society's denial of citizenship to women, slaves and some artisans because of the mistaken, ahistorical assumption that these people were, by their very nature, incapable of reason and consequently incapable of participating in public life. Aristotle's understanding of human nature as uniform and unchanging accounts for his inability to consider how persons might be able to develop their capacities for reason and virtuous action. MacIntyre argues that while the best kind of *polis* will indeed have a hierarchical order, a just hierarchy will be based on teaching and learning and not on the irrational, unjustifiable domination that inevitably results from the ancient Greek conception of human nature.

MacIntyre further claims that the rise of liberalism has unjustifiably marginalized Aristotelianism because liberalism cannot allow for a framework that contradicts its key tenents. It is well known that for liberals there can be no one overriding good for society. A liberal society ostensibly seeks to provide a framework which allows those espousing different concepts of the good life to live together, with all individuals given equal political status and allowed to live by whatever concept of the good they please. Liberalism, however, is not nearly as tolerant of rival traditions as it may seem. Reduced to the status of subjective preferences which must compete in the political marketplace, theories antagonistic to liberalism discover that the terms of the debate have already been set. They cannot question certain fundamental liberal tenents (such as the idea of the political arena as a marketplace and the individual as a locus of preferences) because the institutional framework informed by liberal assumptions is already pre-judged as legitimate and rational. According to

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MacIntyre, the liberal forum systematically blocks debate over fundamental disagreements. "Debates within modern political systems. . . ," he observes, ". . . are almost exclusively between conservative liberals, liberal liberals and radical liberals." (392) This broad consensus on social and political life already embodies an often tacitly held concept of the good: "the continued sustenance of the liberal social and political order." (345) Those who reject liberalism and wish to live a life of virtue must therefore turn away from the institutional framework of the modern liberal state to build alternative institutions and communities grounded in a different tradition where true friendship in Aristotle's sense, based on shared concepts of the good, is possible.

While much of MacIntyre's discussion of liberalism rings true, his blanket condemnation of all modern political orders and apocalyptic call for separatism from mainstream society is hard to swallow. MacIntyre's error is not so much in his portrait of liberalism and its version of practical rationality as in his overestimation of its hegemony over daily life. He assumes that liberal individualism is triumphant everywhere. If, however, most ordinary people ran their lives strictly according to liberal principles and if society were indeed structured along these lines, widespread social breakdown would have occurred long ago. As Taylor has pointed out, what helps keep society together is the fact that some social practices presupposing non-liberal understandings have survived.[3] Most people rely, however surreptitiously, on non-liberal notions like "virtue" and "the good life" when making practical decisions of moral consequence, whatever their avowed theoretical stance. Moreover, some of our collective institutions and practices continue to embody ideals (of, for example, self-government and the virtue of citizenship) which pre-date liberalism. While these ideals can only coexist uneasily alongside the liberal ethos and are continually being attacked or undermined, they are never completely subsumed. MacIntyre cannot see this, which accounts for his defeatism. He would have us abandon all mainstream political institutions to the liberalism he so dislikes and retreat into the monastic existence of small fringe groups.

Because of MacIntyre's mistaken identification of liberalism and modernity, he cannot treat what he calls the "Enlightenment project" with anything but disdain. Yet some of his own arguments belie this blanket condemnation. He cannot help but call upon certain Enlightenment values, notably in the tacit use of the notion of rights in his criticism of the parochial exclusions in Aristotle's system (and this in spite of his claim in *After Virtue* that rights are simply "fictions"[4]). MacIntyre rightly emphasizes the Aristotelian insight that moral lives make sense only within the particularity of social identity. But he fails to acknowledge another important aspect of reality for moral beings; the obligations owed people in respect of their rights as human beings *as such*, outside of any particular

3. Charles Taylor, "Justice After Virtue," *Kritische Methode und Zukunft der Anthropologie*, M. Benedikt & R. Berger, eds. (Vienna, 1985), pp. 23-48.

4. *After Virtue*, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

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social context. MacIntyre tends to associate "rights" with liberalism and therefore dismisses their importance. However, this concept cannot so easily be reduced to an epiphenomenon of liberal ideology. The notion of universally applicable human rights, previsaged by Stoic natural law thinkers, plays a constitutive role in the modern moral landscape and can be effaced only with grave consequences.

MacIntyre closes his book with the question: "To which tradition should we give our allegiance?" Having declared himself both an Aristotelian and an "Augustinian Christian" (10), his answer is clear. As for the rest of us, the answer depends "on who you are and how you understand yourself." (393) This does not, however, prevent MacIntyre from praising the alleged rational superiority of the Thomist synthesis, which is said to have successfully historicized and universalized Aristotelian thought.

MacIntyre emphasizes that his Thomistic "conclusion" must remain tentative, to be confirmed or rejected in further debate. Given the importance he accords to argument, however, it is disappointing to find this final position reached by assertion rather than argumentation. Considering the weight he places on Aquinas' shoulders, he should have devoted much more than a thin chapter (XI) to the Thomist synthesis. Thomism is not free of problems. As Holmes has asked, how can one argue for a tradition-dependent idea of justice and rationality while also pledging allegiance to the Christian ideas of the human soul and the doctrine of original sin, which base their truth claims on their universal validity, i.e. their truth apart from and prior to any particular social and political order?[5]

Whose Justice? Which Rationality? is at times a frustrating and uneven book. On the one hand, MacIntyre's overly-pessimistic misdiagnosis of modernity and the unfinished, clearly inadequate nature of his Thomist claims leaves one wondering if he is not moving in the wrong direction. At the same time, however, the skill and historical sensitivity which he brings to the narrative account of rationality in conflicting, sometimes overlapping traditions is truly impressive and serves as a more than fair compensation. MacIntyre claims that this book is merely a prologue, and intimates that in the sequel he will write from start to finish as a spokesperson for the Thomist position. One can only hope that he will bring as much erudition to an attempted rational reconstruction of Thomism as he has to this discussion of conflicting notions of rationality and justice.

Fredrick Appel

5. Stephen Holmes, "The Polis State," *The New Republic* (June, 1988), p. 39.

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The Posthumous Sartre

Ronald Aronson, *Sartre's Second Critique* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), 253 pp.

Jean-Paul Sartre's *Critique de la raison dialectique*, *Tome II*, appeared in 1985.[1] For years it was believed that Sartre had completed only two chapters of the second volume.[2] Though clearly incomplete, the publication of this second volume as a 456-page book was one of the major surprises of the post-Sartre era.[3] In *Sartre's Second Critique*, Aronson reiterates Sartre's living presence as a philosopher. He not only sets out to give a careful reading of the second volume, but also to establish the *Critiques*' relevance to the debate over the future of Marxism. As Sartre describes it, the object of the second volume is "history itself. . . . All the notions which will emerge from the second volume will be rigorously applied to our own history; my aim will be to prove that there is a dialectical intelligibility of the singular. For ours is a singular history. It is determined by the forces of production and the relations of production, their correspondence and their conflicts."[4] In Aronson's words, "The structures laid out in the first volume — individual praxis, the practico-inert, the series, the group-in-fusion, the sworn group, the institution, social classes — are intended in the second as 'the condition of a directed, developing totalization' . . . " (2)

The first volume of *Critique de la raison dialectique*[5] was the culmination of Sartre's philosophical confrontation with Marxism. As Chiodi points out, the original conception of the work can be traced to *The Transcendence of the Ego* (1934): "It has always seemed to me that a working hypothesis as fruitful as historical materialism never needed for a foundation the absurdity which is metaphysical materialism."[6] Sartre first read *Capital* and *German Ideology* in

1. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Critique de la raison dialectique*, *Tome II (inachevé), L'Intelligibilité de l'histoire*, Arlette Elkaïm-Sartre, ed. (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1985).

2. An excerpt from this work was published with Sartre's permission in *New Left Review* #100 (November 1976-January 1977).

3. Other Sartre events from beyond the grave have included the amazing appearance of his 1947-48 sequel to *Being and Nothingness*, *Cahiers pour une morale* and the publication of his *War Diaries* and personal letters. As Aronson observes, ". . . scarcely anyone anticipated the richness, brilliance, and beauty of the treasure trove of other works." (p. x)

4. Interview with Jean-Paul Sartre, "Itinerary of a Thought," *New Left Review*, 58 (November-December 1969), pp. 58-59.

5. *Critique of Dialectical Reason, I: Theory of Practical Ensembles*, translated by Alan Sheridan Smith, edited by Jonathan Rée (NLB: London, 1976). A new French edition edited by Arlette Elkaim-Sartre appeared in 1985.

6. Pietro Chiodi, *Sartre and Marxism* (Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1976), p. 3.

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1925, later saying he had "understood absolutely nothing."[7] However, as Aronson states, the early Sartre was profoundly affected by his confrontation with Marxism: "Man is not free, Marxism was saying to the Sartre bent on demonstrating freedom." (5)

In the *Critique*, Sartre makes the individual the basis of the dialectic. The abstractions of dogmatic Marxism are replaced with the praxis of individual actions. Aronson provides a breathtaking description of Sartre's idea: "The materiality thereby created — as product, as tool, as organizational structure of the producers themselves — absorbs the separate actions of the multiplicity, holds them in its inertia, and then in turn imposes itself as the given of future actions redirecting and reorganizing them according to *its* logic. Indeed, this brilliant concept, the practico-inert, points to a socialized dimension of individual activity without conceding the existence of Society." (37)

Although Sartre intended the *Critique* as a theoretical work within the tradition of historical materialism, this was far from successful. From the orthodox Left, the book was viewed as an attempt to absorb Marxism into existentialism. Yet, as Aronson points out, Sartre conformed to the idea of the dialectic as the master logic. "Marxism is rigorously true if history is totalization; it is no longer so if human history is decomposed into a plurality of different histories." (230) Thus, in the second volume, Sartre sought to examine specific historical examples of the dialectic defining scarcity as the catalyst of individual praxis. Sartre had intended to encompass projected commentaries on bourgeois democracy, the history of Venice, Chinese feudalism and Western Colonialism. However, only the Russian revolution is treated in the text, specifically a study of the struggle between Trotsky and Stalin.[8]

According to Sartre, prior to 1917 Marxism was an absract ideology in Russia. The revolution disseminated it to the Russian people who translated it into a popular culture. Marxism sank to the educational level of the masses and was reduced to a fossilized doctrine. Yet, it also became, according to Sartre, "the constantly renewed, lived reality of the Soviet masses."[9] The Russian revolution is explained by the categories Sartre has established in the *Critique*: ". . . a common praxis transforms the society through a totalizing action whose counter-finalities make its results practico-inert. In the second, the anti-social forces of the practico-inert impose a negative unity of self-destruction on the society, by usurping the unifying power of the praxis which produced them. In the third, the detotalized unity retotalizes itself in a common attempt to rediscover the objective by stripping it of counter-finalities."[10]

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7. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
8. Arlette Elkaïm-Sartre, "Presentation," *Critique de la raison dialectique, Tome II*, pp. 7-8.
9. Jean-Paul Sartre, "Socialism In One Country," *New Left Review*, 100 (November 1976-January 1977), p. 153.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 163. Sartre's analysis has been applied by others to explain May '68 in France and the Chinese Cultural Revolution. (Fredric Jameson, in *Marxism and Form*

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At the heart of these readings of the *Critique* is a belief in the liberating potential of the Marxist dialectic. The irony of volume II is that Sartre's monumental effort to restore the individual to the Marxist dialectic ends by providing a justification for Stalinism: ". . . Stalin, having been a militant for twenty years, was an opportunist with an iron fist. . . . The supreme necessity was to preserve what had been done, and this meant that a defensive apparatus had to be built."[11] As Aronson observes, ". . . after preparing explicitly to treat a fragmented and conflictual society and history, Sartre has wound up studying a case of a single comprehensible praxis-process. Whatever the dialectic *might be* then, as a 'totalizing movement' unifying a 'swarm of individual doctrines,' the particular one Sartre leads us through is the one terminating in Stalin." (229)

The Critique of Dialectical Reason mirrors Sartre's long relation with the French Communist Party and the USSR. Indeed, as Aronson goes to some lengths to point out, it was written in response to Merleau-Ponty's *The Adventures of the Dialectic*, the work which marked Merleau-Ponty's break with Sartre and Marxism. As others have noted, the *Critique* was written during the Algerian war and was published as the Cuban revolution became victorious. It marked a very active phase of Sartre's political life. However, as Aronson observes, Sartre's hopes for a new politics in Europe faded even before he completed the *Critique*. A letter from Gorz to Aronson emphasizes this point. (234) Sartre no longer believed his conclusions could have any political relevance. Instead of finishing the *Critique*, Sartre wrote the pessimistic play *The Condemned of Altona*.[12] Politically, he turned toward the Third World, writing a militant defense of the Algerian revolution in his preface to Franz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* and a passionate defense of the Cuban revolution.[13]

A case can be made that the *Critique* represented a dead end for Sartre. It was his final attempt to alter the historical course of Marxism. Aronson and others have spent considerable time attempting to establish the *Critique* as a major work of Sartre's philosophy and a major revision of the early *magnum opus*, *Being and Nothingness*.[14] Yet, as the interviewers note in the opening question of their 1969 interview, "In the Critique, the typical concepts of *L'Etre et Le Néant* have disappeared, and a completely new vocabulary has taken their place. Yet when reading the passages of your forthcoming study of Flaubert published in *Les Temps Modernes* one is struck by the sudden re-emergence of

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[Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971], called the Chinese Cultural Revolution "a textbook demonstration" of Sartre's Critique: ". . . a deliberate attempt, not to revive the Party apparatus, but to provide a new and fresh wave of group formation and revolutionary cohesiveness to take the place of the older, ossified groups. . . ." (p. 272). Aronson appears to have forseen the beginnings of *glasnost* based on his study of Sartre's methodology (p. 243).

11. Sartre, "Socialism In One Country," *op. cit.*, p. 163.
12. *Les séquestrés d'Altona* (Paris: Gaillimard, 1959).
13. Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1966). Jean-Paul Sartre, "Ideology and Revolution," *Studies on the Left*, vol. 1, no. 3 (1960), pp. 7-16.
14. *L'etre et le néant* (Paris: Gaillimard, 1943).

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the characteristic idiom of the early workathetic consciousnesss, ego, nihilation, being, nothingness. These notions are now juxtaposed in the text with the distinct set of concepts which derive from the *Critique* — serialization, totalization, practico-inert, collectives."[15]

In its preface, Sartre states that "*The Family Idiot* is the sequel to *Search for a Method*. Its subject: What, at this point in time, can we know about a man?"[16] In the Flaubert book, Sartre establishes the category of "lived experience" (*le veçu*) taking into account "the non-conscious, non-intentional aspect of praxis."[17] As Cohen-Solal observes, it is possible to see the Flaubert work as "a parenthesis, an illustration, a development, an overcoming, and a synthesis of the *Critique*."[18] It is also possible to view it as a major philosophical achievement — a work which soared far beyond the limitations of the confrontation with Marxism.[19] The *Critique*, written rapidly under the influence of drugs and alcohol, represented the flame-out of a political career; one that never resumed in the same way.

Aronson has written one of the most interesting assessments of the *Critique* and an essential companion to Volume II. The political dead end of the *Critique*, is, however, sadly apparent in Aronson's own political hopes for a renewal of the socialist revolution in the USSR: "Marxism retains a liberating core which must remain a constant thorn in the side of Soviet rulers who teach it, live by it — and deny it in their daily practice. . . . One whole side of it, with all its gaps, weaknesses, and omissions, remains revolutionary and liberating — in Moscow even when taught as catechism, at Harvard even when studied as falsehood." (243) Despite Aronson's assessment, the old catechisms may well be swept away in the process of modernizing the Soviet state. Even if a Soviet "Solidarity" arises as Aronson predicts, it is questionable whether its politics will be framed in the categories of Marx and Lenin.[20] The USSR more likely could end up resembling France or Spain. Conflicts will be expressed in various quasi-democratic channels and suppressed by the state riot police when they spill over into the streets.

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15. Sartre, "Itinerary of a Thought," *op. cit.*, p. 43.

16. Jean-Paul Sartre, *L'idiot de la famille*, vols. 1 and 2 (Paris: Gaillamard, 1971), *The Family Idiot*, vol. 1, translated by Carol Cosman (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), p. ix. Originally *Search for a Method* (*Question de méthode*) was included as the preface to *Critique de la raison dialectique, Tome I*. Even Aronson acknowledges that Sartre develops many of the ideas raised in *Search for a Method* in his later work on Flaubert (p. 74).

17. Mark Poster, *Existential Marxism in Postwar France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), p. 304.

18. Annie Cohen-Solal, *Sartre — A Life*, trans. by Anna Cancogni (New York: Pantheon Books, 1987), p. 377.

19. See Hazel E. Barnes, *Sartre and Flaubert* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), p. 8, for a defense of *The Family Idiot* as philosophy.

20. See William Pfaff, "Reflections-Leninism," *The New Yorker* (August 1, 1988), pp. 60-65.

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Aronson's belief in the possiblities of Soviet reform date back at least as far as 1966 when he described the USSR as "a threat to American capitalism because it pointed to a rational working alternative to the chaos and inequity of the American economic system."[21] Aronson's relative optimism regarding the USSR should not lead one to ignore the Marcusian dimension of his thinking, which was expressed in an early essay in *Studies On The Left*[22] — one of the most trenchant Marxist analysis of the limitations of the New Left by one of its participants.

While it is possible to situate the *Critique* within a narrow political context, it would be a mistake to do so. Despite its provisional nature, it is still a major philosophical landmark in Sartre's life. Chiodi has provided one of the more interesting philosophical explanations for its failure. He draws a parallel between the efforts of Sartre in the *Critique* and Heidegger in *Being and Time* to ". . . question the meaning of being in its historicity; in both cases the inquiry is to be carried out in two volumes, the first of which deals with the analytico-regressive conditions of the fundamental question; both regard their task as being the elaboration of a 'structural anthropology'; in both cases, the second volume is still missing. . . ."[23]

Ever since the emergence of Sartre as "the existentialist," his philosophy has been submerged by the publicity surrounding his political stands and private life. Even to some of his most enthusiastic followers, Sartre's works remained a mystery. In the early 1970s, his young Maoist collaborators boldly displayed their ignorance, asking him why he had written *The Family Idiot* instead of a proletarian novel.[24] Heidegger was well aware of the pitfalls of philosophical fame: "Fame is not only the ridiculous way we are honored nowadays by being bandied about everywhere. Fame also has hidden tricks of its own, which R. M. Rilke once stated in the following way: 'For in the end fame is only the sum total of all misunderstandings that gather around a new name'."[25]

The misunderstandings and controversies surrounding Sartre continue to generate a maelstrom with no end in sight (including the recent feminist debates generated by new revelations about his private life). Apart from these debates, Sartre's *The Family Idiot* still beckons as a vast, largely unexplored territory. Sartre, the man, will always be remembered as the philosopher who led an exemplary and selfless life, and who acted with uncompromising courage in his opposition to racism, Nazism, Stalinism, the Algerian war, and the US invasion of Vietnam. His support of the oppressed was unequivocal. "'The

21. Ronald Aronson, "Socialism: The Sustaining Menace," *Studies on the Left*, vol. 1.6, no. 3 (May-June, 1966), p. 58.

22. "The Movement and Its Critics," *Studies on the Left*, no. 1, (January-February 1966), pp. 3-19.

23. Chiodi, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

24. Philippe Gavi, Jean-Paul Sartre, Pierre Victor, *On a raison de se révolter* (Paris: Gallimard, 1974), p. 105.

25. Martin Heidegger, *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. by Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), p. 147.

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damned of the earth' are precisely the only people capable of changing life, and who do change it every day, who feed, clothe and house humanity as a whole."[26]

In his literary works *Nausea* and *The Roads to Freedom* can be found the epitaph for our century. There is a passage in the *Critique*, the existentialist kernel in the Marxist shell, which can also be found in *The Condemned of Altona*, that reminds one of the long shadow Sartre casts over the events of our century: "Nothing — not even wild beasts or microbes — could be more terrifying for man than a species which is intelligent, carnivorous and cruel, and which can understand and outwit human intelligence, and whose aim is precisely the destruction of man. This, however, is obviously our own species as perceived in others by each of its members in the context of scarcity."[27]

Tom Good

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26. Sartre, "Preface," to *The Wretched of The Earth* by Fanon, *op. cit.*, p. 24.
27. Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason 1*, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

The Forces of Reproduction

Alice Yaeger Kaplan, *Reproductions of Banality: Fascism, Literature, and French Intellectual Life* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986).

The current wave of extreme nationalism in France should dispel any illusions that fascism was a phenomenon which began and ended with Nazism. Although focused on the period between the wars, Kaplan's engrossing if diffuse study of French fascism bears a disturbing relevance to the contemporary French political scene, where the ultrareactionary National Front is spreading its xenophobic gospel — "La France aux Français!" — with alarming success.

Working with categories borrowed from developmental psychology and psychoanalysis, Kaplan ascribes the popularity of fascism to what she calls its "mother-bound" elements, which evoke the oceanic feeling that Freud, in

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Civilization and its Discontents,[1] associates with the relationship between an infant and its mother. In this sense, *Reproductions of Banality* carries on in the tradition of Theweleit's analysis of the sexual fantasies of German *Freikorps* officers.[2] Kaplan's affinity with Theweleit is apparent in her attention to representations of the feminine in fascist narratives, as well as in her broader inquiry into why so many people find fascism sexy. Her only criticism of Theweleit is tucked away at the end of a footnote, where she objects to his depiction of the typical fascist as an "everymale." By the same token, Kaplan herself risks universalizing the appeal of fascism by dwelling at such length on its powers of seduction. Her repeated invocation of psychoanalysis seems no less liable than Theweleit's to dehistoricize fascism, which is analyzed in terms of the allegedly universal vicissitudes of psychic development. Such an approach fails to account for any resistance to fascism, except perhaps by those with an aberrant libidinal makeup. The positing of a built-in predisposition to fascism, moreover, nullifies the issue of culpability, which Hannah Arendt foregrounds in her *Eichmann in Jerusalem*,[3] and which Kaplan seems to condemn implicitly in her dismissal of Arendt's "moralism." This rejection of moralism in the analysis of fascism (for which she again credits Theweleit), seems somehow at odds, however, with Kaplan's repeated assertion of her own position as a committed antifascist scholar.

Implicit in Kaplan's critique of Arendt is the emphasis on the distinction, which Arendt does not make, between fascism's early populist phase and its later bureaucratic outcome. Kaplan argues that France is the ideal place to study fascist discourses because they have thrived there the longest without an established fascist state, thus bypassing the routinization, in the Weberian sense, of the charismatic features that characterize fascism before its institutionalization. The mother-bound desires that Kaplan invokes, then, would emerge in what she calls fascism's "gathering" stage, thereby accounting for the emotional appeal of its initially revolutionary energy.

It is only in the latter phase that fascist art becomes less than imaginative, reifying the utopian elements that characterize the "gathering" stage. This utopian dimension would explain fascism's appeal to talented artists and intellectuals, which Kaplan criticizes Arendt for overlooking. For Kaplan, the designation of Eichmann's simple-mindedness as a model of the fascist psyche, i.e., the insistence that fascists are, by definition, devoid of imagination, precludes the serious consideration of fascist art as anything but unsuccessful and uninspired. In opposition to Arendt's contention that anyone with common sense would not fail to see through fascist ideology, Kaplan cites the considerable

1. Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, Standard Edition, vol. XXI, trans. by James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1961), pp. 64-145.
2. Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*, trans. by Stephen Conway (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).
3. Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (New York: Viking, 1963).

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number of "respectable," "sane-thinking" and even "brilliant" people who were drawn to fascism, and adopts Benjamin's reading of fascist banality as a predominantly aesthetic, "highly *imaginative* construct" (49, original emphasis). Kaplan suggests that it is this aesthetic dimension of fascism that constitutes its utopian appeal, and stresses the importance of analyzing fascist ideology through the images it manufactures of itself in popular artforms such as radio, journalism, and film. She likens her attention to fascism's seemingly trivial, everyday manifestations in mass culture to Freud's analysis of screen memories, which are characterized by a clarity and persistence that seem incompatible with the apparent insignificance of their content. Memories such as these are valuable to the analyst because they conceal repressed sexual fantasies from childhood in a seemingly innocent context that does not risk stirring up old traumas while still managing to reproduce them insidiously. In other words, it is the very banality of the screen memory that makes it the perfect vehicle for the reproduction of anxiety-provoking subject matter that would otherwise be entirely repressed by psychic defense mechanisms. Kaplan uses this analogy from psychoanalysis to distinguish her use of "banality" from Arendt's, and to validate her focus on popular artforms that other critics have tended to dismiss as trivial. Despite her efforts to differentiate herself from Arendt, however, it is not clear to what extent Kaplan's notion of banality actually differs from one that emphasizes a fundamental inability to comprehend the implications of one's political involvement. As Russell Berman points out in his foreword, Kaplan's portrait of Maurice Bardèche in the last chapter, which reveals the inconsistent and self-contradictory nature of his selective memory, "provides a stand-in for the Eichmann who, as Arendt assures us, could not think."(xix) Bardèche's language, like Eichmann's, is rife with clichés, which take the form of romanticized musings about life in the Jewish ghettos. How does this persistent recourse to reconstructions of the past differ from the role of banality in screen memory, which deflects emphasis from what is too horrendous to acknowledge onto a tangential detail? This confusion remains unresolved.

Despite a few unanswered (and unasked) questions, Kaplan's study manages to cover a lot of ground. One of the book's strengths lies in its analyses of literary works that were influential in French fascist circles. The discussion of Céline is based largely on a critique of Kristeva's readings of the French anti-Semitic author in *Powers of Horror* and *Desire in Language* — material that has been under attack in the recent controversy over its endorsement by Paul de Man. Kristeva separates Céline's literary production from his fascism by interpreting his style as a synthesis of modern and "primitive" components. In Kaplan's view, such an interpretation is profoundly ahistorical. She argues that Céline's writing cannot be dissociated from the political climate of its time, and maintains that the colloquial language of his novels and pamphlets is unmistakably rooted in the streets of France. What Kaplan calls the "Frenchness of his sentences" (120) accounts for Céline's nationalist appeal and his embrace by the French fascist right which saw in him "a chance to differentiate itself from

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that lucid, classical Maurrasian right, from right-wing aristocracy and right-wing lucidity." (120) Again, this kind of analysis lends itself to an interpretation of the LePen phenomenon, in which the extreme right wing prides itself on the ideological positions that set it apart from more mainstream conservative politics.

Kaplan draws some compelling analogies between Céline's literary/political writings and the highly stylized medical dissertation he wrote on the Hungarian physician Philippe Ignace Semmelweis, who induced, before the discovery of germs, the infectious nature of the transmission of puerperal (childbed) fever. Pathology was, of course, a key topos in fascist propaganda, where the "purity" of the Aryan race was played off against the threat of "pestilence" posed by other ethnic groups — and it was not long before the rhetoric of infirmity left the symbolic realm to slide into the reality of Hitler's "euthanasia centers." Kaplan traces this combination of the ethnographic and the diagnostic in what are often brilliant close readings of Céline's novels of the 1930s.

This theme is taken up again in a discussion of the fascist suspicion that radio was "plagued" by Jews: the problem with the Popular Front stations of the 1930s, complains the French fascist Robert Brasillach in his memoirs, was that they exposed radio's "Yiddish accent." (134) Kaplan notes that the word parasite, which is applied in traditional anti-Semitic parlance to the Jews, became officially part of the language of French radio transmission in 1928, when it became synonymous with any interference in the reception of a radio broadcast. The voice thus became a locus of national identity in fascism, strengthened by the fear of an encroaching foreign "static."[4]

Associated with this fear of interference was the image of the Jew as omnipresent. In early June 1941, when the Jews in occupied France were ordered to wear yellow stars, mainstream French newspapers proclaimed the event with headlines such as "*L'Abondance des Juifs sur les trottoirs parisiens a ouvert les yeux aux plus aveugles*," and "*Jamais on n'eût pu penser qu'il y avait autant de Juifs à Paris*."[5] This stereotype of Jewish "ubiquity" was seen by French and German fascists alike as a threat to the "particularity" of their respective national identities. In this context, the title of Brasillach's fascist newspaper, *Je Suis Partout* (*I am Everywhere*), has an ironic ring to it: as Kaplan points out, "*Je suis*" is both "I am" and "I follow"; to be a fascist, then, is to follow the leader, everywhere — but it is also to follow (the example of) the "ubiquitous" Jews.

The fascist aspiration to be everywhere is one instance of what Berman

4. In this light, Kaplan points out the etymological significance of the word *dictator* (the one who speaks), which reveals the fascist investment in the power of the voice. This fear of vocal invasion, she explains, was also expressed by fascist critics in their ambivalence toward the introduction of sound film, in which they saw, on the one hand, the potential for a renewal of a French *chanson de geste* that could be used to rally the masses but, on the other hand, the threat of a "fearful Jewish rootlessness." (148)

5. "The abundance of Jews on French sidewalks has opened even the blindest eyes"; "One could never have thought there were so many Jews in Paris." Newspaper articles cited in Philippe Ganier Raymond, *Une Certaine France* (Paris: Balland, 1975), p. 72ff.

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characterizes as the "fascist mimesis of the Jew as a moment in its own imagination." (xxi) This being/following symbiosis is so pervasive in Kaplan's study that it inevitably informs her approach, suggesting that *being* a critic of fascism is somehow bound up in *following*, or mirroring, certain formal aspects of what is being criticized. Kaplan's work thus sets itself apart from more traditional antifascist scholarship, which tends to construct what Berman calls a "self-serving alibi." (xiv) Typical containment theories — such as Sartre's in his 1946 essay, "*Qu'est-ce qu'un collaborateur?*"[6] — represent fascism as an "absolute other," as something completely alien to the critic's own cultural heritage. Implicit in Kaplan's critique of Sartre is the notion that it is only in approaching fascism from the inside that the critic can get outside of the very opposition (a fundamentally nationalist one) which grounds fascist discourse: that between inside and outside.

Kaplan's mimetic appropriation of fascist and protofascist forms is central to the way her book plays on its own status as a product of the culture industry, like the work of the fascist writers she discusses, whom she notes were extremely conscious of the role of their own writings as commodities. Recognizing her project's potential complicity with the ideology she seeks to criticize, she points out the similarity between what she calls "fascist form-production" and the "aestheticization and mass marketing of ideology" (170) in advanced industrial societies. Following Benjamin, Kaplan defines fascism as the "aestheticization of politics," and then proceeds to aestheticize many of her own ostensibly political gestures. One of the most striking examples of this incongruity can be found without even opening the book. The hardcover edition bears the swastika-like insignia that appeared prominently on the front page of every issue of the fascist-affiliated Italian newspaper, *Futurismo*. The recently-issued paperback edition of the book, whose design was approved by Kaplan, is also covered with the bright orange airplanes that adorned a special issue of the futurist paper. In a section devoted to the analysis of a novel by Marinetti, the founder of futurism, Kaplan discusses the erotico-aesthetic significance of the airplane in futurist narratives in terms of the movement's protofascist affinities. She links Marinetti's airplane fetish to the opening scene of Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will*, in which the camera assumes the position of an airplane swooping down over columns of marching soldiers, from what is supposed to be Hitler's perspective in 1934 at the Nuremberg rally. Kaplan's observation that *Triumph of the Will* synthesized "the abandonment of the earth in futurism with the return-to-earth populism of a triumphant Hitler" (92) calls attention to fascism's characteristic binding of polar opposites (in this case, elitism and populism). Likewise, fascism uses the same synthetic logic to combine a glorification of technology with a certain nostalgia for an archaic, preindustrial society. It is the coexistence of such polar opposites, Kaplan

6. Jean-Paul Sartre, "Qu'est-ce qu'un collaborateur?" *Situations*, vol. 3 (Paris: Gallimard, 1949), pp. 43-62.

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points out, that formed the basis for fascism's totalizing appeal — and also, therefore, for the totalizing appeal of her own book, which employs fascist trappings to package the product of antifascist scholarship. The use of the overdetermined image of the airplane to represent the contents of the book bespeaks a deliberate identification with what Kaplan calls "fascist-form production" (170), and serves as a reminder of the ever-present specter of fascism haunting industrial capitalist society.

Another instance of aestheticized politics surfaces at the end of the book, in Kaplan's interview with Bardèche, who published the *Histoire du Cinéma* in collaboration with his brother-in-law Brasillach in 1935. Kaplan leaves no doubt that she is aware of the risk of complicity involved in interviewing a fascist. She writes, "I wonder, then, if the political interview at its best doesn't involve this sort of dialectic — questioning its own susceptibility to collaboration with the subject?" (165) As if to highlight the compromising position in which the interview places her, the chapter that comprises it is entitled "The Late Show." This political interview-as-B-movie motif is taken up again at the conclusion of the interview, where Kaplan, using brackets the way notes for the director are indicated in a movie script, writes of riding off in the sunset: "[Suzanne Bardèche interrupts our silence following this remark to announce that one of the grandchildren has returned from the beach, bitten by a jellyfish. After the wound has been tended, we sit on the porch drinking tea. I head back to my hotel in the dusk.]" (188)

This book is willfully distracting, in the revolutionary sense of the distraction that Benjamin opposes to the passive activity of concentration *vis-à-vis* auratic art in the age of mechanical reproduction. Like the function of film (as Benjamin describes it), Kaplan's study at once insists on and contributes to the collective experience of fascism, in the hope of eliciting a progressive response to this experience. The acknowledgment of the impossibility of critical distance from fascism, even as one criticizes it, implies a refusal to buy into its self-imposed cult value or aura, which Benjamin defines as a "unique phenomenon of distance however close it may be."[7] As if to confirm that she is dealing with a phenomenon which is neither unique nor distant, Kaplan stands fascism on its head, only to reproduce its reproductions in inverted fashion, like the mirror image of a mirror. Flipping back and forth between the forces of resistance and collaboration, she attempts to rip open the fascist dream of closure that grounds much academic criticism. The point seems to be that the academization of politics in advanced capitalist society has too much in common with the aestheticization of politics to do more, at best, than question its own political significance.

There is a point, however, at which Kaplan's mirroring mechanism appears to reach a point of no return. In a discussion of her interview with Bardèche,

7. Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, trans. by Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), p. 243n.

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she mentions a book he published in 1948[8] in which he claims that at the end of the war the Allies constructed phony gas chambers in the concentration camps to be filmed and publicized all over the world: these "reconstructions," Bardèche insists, were as "unfaithful" and "unrepresentative" of what they purported to represent as any Hollywood movie. According to Kaplan, "With the critique that the Holocaust circulates inappropriately as a commodity, the six million dead are made to recede from the 'picture.' The Holocaust is repressed in Bardèche's writing at the same time as it is described as a *mise en scène*, an 'admirable montage technique': because the Americans filmed the camps, they might as well have done it in Hollywood — such camps didn't actually exist. Thus, the true signifiers of the Holocaust — the six million dead — are once again murdered and lost from within a critique of their representation." (167)

Kaplan's use of the word "Holocaust" and her insistence on the figure "six million" are references to the fate of one third of the Jewish people at the hands of the Nazis. It is not clear, however, why Kaplan has chosen to single out the Jews in a discussion of the general existence of gas chambers in the concentration camps, in which the total dead, it has been estimated, numbered closer to twelve million; the implication is that Jews were the only people who died in the camps. While it is crucial to recognize the specificity of the threat of genocide to Jews *in particular*, as well as the central role that the scapegoating of the Jews played in mobilizing the forces of fascist oppression, it also seems crucial to take into account the millions of others who perished in Nazi death camps. Must acknowledging either of these truths always entail the eclipse of the other? Whether Kaplan's omission is a rhetorical strategy or an oversight, it "works" in the same way that the orange airplanes and the aestheticization of the political interview function in the logic of her text: by isolating the Jews from the approximately six million other concentration camp victims, Kaplan is mirroring Bardèche's own rewriting of history, whereby "the six million dead are made to recede from the 'picture' " — only, from Kaplan's picture, it is the six million other dead who are made to recede. The power of Kaplan's dialectical appropriation of fascist forms of representation is that it functions with the same force in a moment of blindness as it does in her (far more frequent) moments of insight. The same caution, then, might be invoked in response to this sort of rhetorical strategy as that with which Freud inserted the following question at the end of the 1931 edition of *Civilization and its Discontents*, when Hitler's rise to power was beginning to cast doubt on the outcome of the struggle between "the eternal Eros" and its adversary, the death instinct: "But who can foresee with what success and with what result?"[9]

Elizabeth Ezra

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8. Maurice Bardèche, *Nuremberg ou la terre promise* (Paris: Les Sept Couleurs, 1948).
9. Freud, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

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Viva Kazan

Elia Kazan, *A Life* (New York: Knopf, 1988), 848 pp..

Kazan's epic, confessional autobiography reads like his best films, strong on energy and passion, short on delicacy and style. The book takes Kazan from his conflict-ridden relation with his authoritarian, Anatolian Greek rug-merchant father through his many and varied friendships, marriages and careers. Along the way there are pointed anecdotes about, and penetrating analyses of, his years at the Group Theater, the Actors Studio, Lincoln Center and Hollywood, and his experiences directing Williams and Miller on Broadway. There is also a convoluted, self-justifying account of why Kazan infamously acted as an informer before HUAC — an act which shadows his work (e.g., *On The Waterfront*), and continues to stir angry reactions and disturb Kazan himself.

A Life is a sprawling, sometimes repetitive book about a complex figure who can be sharply aware and honest about his own flaws, and yet smug about his display of candor, confusing self-revelation with self-knowledge. Besides his tortuous reflections on the HUAC episode, Kazan is unable or unwilling to explore his relations with his many children or get to the psychological heart of his compulsive need for womanizing. What is most striking about Kazan is the intensity, the powerful force that flows through his multiple lives. Even now, at 78, contemplating death, Kazan is preparing to set off to Greece to make a new film. He is a man with a great appetite for living, and the book succeeds in drawing us into its sheer intensity.

A Life is richly inhabited by personalities, incidents and institutions. But beyond the gossipy portraits of Broadway and Hollywood figures like Clifford Odets, Darryl F. Zanuck, Harold Clurman and James Dean — and beyond Kazan's detailing of his career as an actor, his travels abroad, and his casual relation with Marilyn Monroe — there is a striking account of a productive artist.

Despite Kazan's penchant for excessive self-analysis and confessional detail, it is not easy to get a handle on who he is, or what his films are trying to say. Though Kazan's films never touch the psychological depths of Bergman or the political subtlety of Wajda, Petri or Rosi, they are, nevertheless, emotionally complex and deal with significant political and social issues (e.g., union corruption, the media, and the nature of revolution and social progress). Kazan clearly prides himself on his sense of ambivalence in his life and in his work. In Michel Ciment's book-length interview (*Kazan on Kazan*), he states that ambiguity "is the truth for me, and I think that when you don't have that in a work, the work suffers, not only in terms of subtlety, but suffers in terms of truth telling . . . ." This is especially true of *Viva Zapata*, a film which can alternately be seen as Cold War anti-communist, Trotskyist, anarchist,

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liberal and populist in its sympathies, or as an inchoate combination of all of the above.

His many films and lives have lent themselves to conflicting interpretations — permeated with a number of contradictory, divided selves and perspectives: Kazan, the believer in/critic of America and the American Dream; Kazan, the upholder of bourgeois success, Kazan, the ethnic outsider-rebel with a personal artistic vision who rejects a market-oriented theater and wants only to direct works that he is emotionally connected to; Kazan, the angry ruthless risk-taker/ingratiating, adaptable "good boy" whose desire to be liked may be one reason he both joined the Party and testified before HUAC; and the Kazan who has a profound love-hate relation with his Greek immigrant roots which he simultaneously adheres to and tries to leave behind.

A number of these Kazans appear in his autobiography. In high school Kazan wanted "passionately, to be an American" and later he had affairs with the sort of pretty blondes who represent WASP America to him. At the same time, he believes artists should stay in touch with their ethnic roots, making *America, America* (his favorite film) about his uncle's archetypal immigrant's trek from Anatolia to New York. He loved his first wife, Molly, a principled, strong-willed Yankee who provided him with needed intellectual and emotional support and an ordered home life. But he felt constrained by the domesticity and predictability of the marriage and repayed her loyalty by having innumerable affairs. He is filled with guilt and remorse about his behavior with Molly, but his rebel self wanted to break out of control and embrace adventure, disorder, experience. In Kazan's own words: "he wanted it all." He never really brings these conflicting selves together, and there are moments when his repeated commitment to ambiguity seems facile. Still, underneath the ambivalence there lurks a tangled but *un*ambiguous vision of the good.

Like most American film directors, Kazan is neither an ideologue nor a systematic thinker. However, he is also no Ford or Hawks, brilliantly and often obliquely projecting their social or moral vision through a host of genre conventions while hiding much of their internal life from public view. In Kazan's case, the centerpiece of the films *is* his internal emotional life. In his best works he achieves a direct existential connection with the world he evokes on the screen.

In films like *On The Waterfront* and *Viva Zapata*, the protagonist-hero (played by Marlon Brando) embodies Kazan's vision of the self. Both men have sufficient personal courage to stand up to sterile dogmatists, obsequious bourgeois and corrupt figures. They are also both outsiders, with enough charisma, romantic passion and energy to break from the world that shapes them.

Kazan's emphasis in *A Life* and in most of his films is more on the personal than the political. In fact, his anger at the Communists was built less on their particular politics than on what he saw as their self-righteous and arrogant behavior. And Terry Malloy's modest victory over the union leader in *On The Waterfront* is much more an act of personal and moral redemption than a triumph for a more honest and socially motivated form of unionism. The films

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deal with social and political questions, but the real avenue of social redress is through individual heroism, not collective or institutional action — a political staple of American films from Capra to Stallone. Of course, Kazan's variation on American individualism has a less mythic cast. His romantic heroes are less archetypal; more psychologically complex (ambiguous) than Capra's Mr. Smith and Deeds (Kazan does see himself as a man of the Left, which Capra never did). Despite Kazan's gestures at political engagement, what is clearly most important to this multi-layered, egomaniacal artist is the act of exploring the nature of his own self. It is a process *A Life* seductively indulges in.

Leonard Quart

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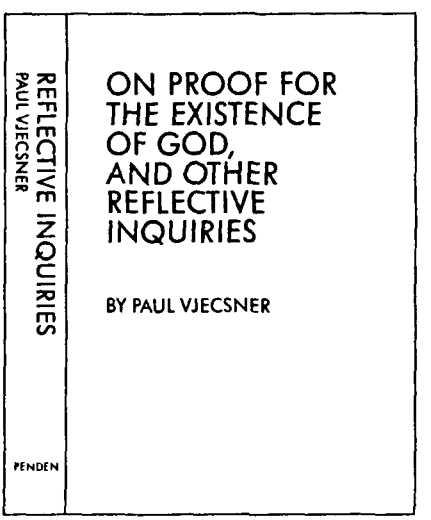

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